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Government apology to natives a 'first step'

by Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — The federal government has apologized to Canada's native people for the damage done by the residential school system it helped to set up, and is promising money to help the healing process for victims of the system. But some critics feel the government has not gone far enough in addressing native concerns. They are calling for more concrete solutions.

The government's apology is part of its long-delayed response to the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. On Jan. 7, Jane Stewart, federal Minister of Indian Affairs, read the apology in Ottawa.

In her speech, Stewart focused on the harm done by the residential school system. "This system separated many children from their families and communities and prevented them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures.... Tragically, some children were the victims of physical and sexual abuse. The government of Canada acknowledges the role it played in the develop-

ment and administration of these schools. Particularly to those individuals who experienced the tragedy of sexual and physical abuse at residential schools ... we are deeply sorry."

The government, she said, wants to work with native groups and churches, especially, to resolve issues related to this school system.

Restoring Riel

Stewart announced, too, plans to "look for ways of affirming the contributions of Metis people in Canada and of reflecting Louis Riel's proper place in Canada's history."

The government plans to back up its apology with \$600 million. \$350 million is earmarked for aboriginal communities to spend on healing initiatives such as counselling and language training; a further \$250 million is designated for economic development and native self-government.

John Stellingworth, director of the Edmonton Native Healing Centre (a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church), has mixed feelings about the government's apology. "I read a bunch of excellent words, but



Natives at Koyukon village, the Yukon, dance at a 'potlatch.'

words don't mean a lot," he says. "I think this is a good start. It's long overdue. I hope and

pray it doesn't end here."

Although the apology focuses on residential schools, Stel-

lingworth says, "I think, from my experience, a greater injustice is the reservation system." That system is characterized by paternalism and oppression, he asserts. "One of the problems with that system is the government set up the reservations typically on land that wasn't suitable for native people to develop a livelihood. Over the years, they became very dependent on welfare."

Reserves 'appalling'

Stellingworth has visited reservations where living conditions are "quite appalling," and says, "Many reservations are extremely dysfunctional communities."

Canada's aboriginals are too dependent on the Department of Indian Affairs and need to have the power to take charge of their own affairs, says Stellingworth.

Working at his centre, Stellingworth deals with people whose lives have been hurt by both the reservation system and residential schools. First Nations and Metis people he has spoken with have said "it's about time" for the government to apologize.

But Stellingworth notes that See GOVERNMENT p. 2...

Cancelled airshow surprises Abbotsford residents



College professor Ron Dart, an organizer of the Fraser Valley Arts and Peace Festival makes a point during a discussion of the Abbotsford International Airshow.

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Recent news that the 1998 Abbotsford International Airshow would be cancelled shocked most residents of the Fraser Valley city — including the peace activists who organized the annual Fraser Valley Arts and Peace Festival to rival the show.

Since 1988, the festival has highlighted international peace issues as a counterpoint to the airshow's celebration of military aircraft and flight. It started as a small-scale, one-day event organized by Mennonites in the peace tradition and has developed into an inter-denominational, two-week festival

featuring art, music and drama.

Now, festival organizers may use the grounding of the 1998 airshow as an opportunity to focus the 1998 festival on local, rather than international, issues.

In December, the society that runs the popular airshow cited financial problems in cancelling the 1998 show and announced it would run biennially. In spite of

a three-day attendance of over 200,000 last year, the show lost more than \$150,000.

Switch to local issues

The surprise cancellation has local peace activists pondering a shift in focus for their annual peace festival.

"I'd like to see the festival See FESTIVAL page 2...

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News

Government needs to rebuild partnership with natives

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the government's response focuses only on natives living on reserves. "What about the urban aboriginal people who've fallen through the cracks?" he asks.

Full partners

In order to solve longstanding problems between the government and native people, he says, "the federal government is going to have to acknowledge native people as full partners. Canada at its own peril ignores that."

Rick Bauman, who works with Mennonite Central Committees Aboriginal Neighbors program in Ontario, calls the government's response "a very small piece of building the relationship" between government and aboriginals.

Bauman is pleased that the government is planning to start an arms-length, third-party approach to land claims settlements. But he believes natives need greater control over natural resources so that they can establish a better economic base. Bauman acknowledges that Indian Affairs Minister Stewart is

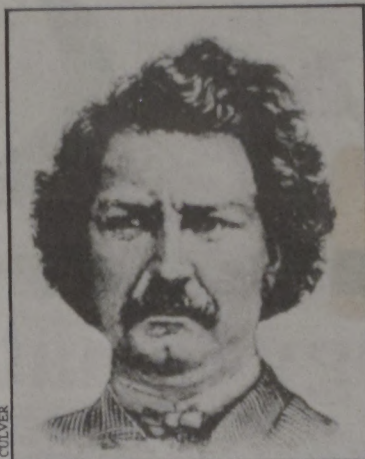
"someone ready to make fundamental changes" in the way government deals with aboriginals.

Arie Van Eek, executive secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, says the apology "would have been symbolically a little better if the prime minister had made the announcement." But even so, he says, "It has tremendous symbolic value. My hope is [natives] will be encouraged by this step."

Apology needs follow-up

But Van Eek insists that the government should follow up the apology in practical ways. The \$350 million designated for healing "doesn't sound like a lot of money to me," he says. "The healing that can be done through counseling has to be followed by opportunities for learning, employment, better housing."

The \$250 million designated for self-government and economic development is "a drop in the bucket," according to Van Eek, who adds, "It is too vague for me to see how that will be



Louis Riel

implemented. Seeing is believing."

Van Eek wants the government to consult more with native people about decisions that concern them. "The government should no longer make decisions about them but with them."

He also believes that the churches that were involved with residential schools have a direct responsibility to help with the healing of native people and that other denominations, such

as the Christian Reformed Church, also have to expose and fight against prejudice.

Lorraine Land, aboriginal affairs specialist for Citizens for Public Justice, believes the churches that ran the residential school system (the United, Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian churches), need to work closely together with the government to deal with outstanding issues.

Put money behind it

The United Church has already admitted it was part of the problem with residential schools and has started its own healing fund, she notes. Former students of the residential schools can apply for money from this fund.

Land sees the apology as a positive development, but would have liked to have seen more solid commitments. Of the \$350 million healing fund, most of the funds were already in place, she says.

She agrees that Prime Minister Chretien should have made the apology in Parliament.

Land sees the government's

reference to Metis as "more of a symbolic gesture than a concrete gesture.... One of the groups that have lost the most are the Metis."

'Accountability crisis'

Land criticizes the government for consulting only the Assembly of First Nations when preparing its response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Inuit and Metis people were not consulted, which was "a serious oversight."

Mike Scott, the Reform Party's Indian Affairs critic, describes the government's planned spending as "the time-honored Liberal way of throwing money at problems in the hopes [they] will disappear."

Scott calls the government's apology "admirable," but criticizes what he calls "the fiscal and democratic accountability crisis characterizing the Department of Indian Affairs and Canada's reserves," and says the government should be more specific in spelling out how its healing fund will be distributed.

Festival will focus on building up community

... continued from page 1

continue, because it's an integral and essential part of the community here now," said Ron Dart, an Anglican and festival organizer.

He said organizers may shift the focus of the 1998 festival from international peace issues

to "local peace-making" and enriching and building up a sense of community in Abbotsford.

"We have breakdowns in our own community, with people living in their own isolated little ghettos and hardly knowing neighbors, as well as religious polarization," said Dart.

Last year, the festival featured dissident Chinese artist Gu Xiong, whose 1989 Beijing art show led to the student protests that were crushed by tanks in Tiananmen Square.

Also featured was a photography exhibit by Elaine Briere, whose photographs were among the last taken in East Timor before Indonesia invaded the country in 1975.

Dart believes the airshow cancellation is occurring at the same time as a "subtle mood and culture shift" in the broader Mennonite community and the Christian community.

Five years ago, the Arts and Peace Festival was seen as "Public Enemy Number 1" for opposing the militarism of the popular airshow, said Dart. But last year, he noted, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce included the festival on its list of events happening in Abbotsford.

Highlight violence by governments

"Some people are coming around to the realization that 'Do we really want to be a city known for its militarism?'" said Dart. "There's a desire to be something other than the home of warlords and sophisticated

mercenaries."

One of the highlights of last year's airshow was an appearance by the B-2 Stealth bomber — a \$2.2 billion plane used by the U.S. against Iraq in the Persian Gulf War.

More people are becoming aware of violence in a society — including the violence perpetrated by governments and armies against civilians, said Dart.

"It's no good to say you're against violence but bring in the most violent people in the world," noted Dart, who also gave an alternate lecture at UBC while APEC leaders wine and dined there.

At some point, the conflict becomes so pronounced you become schizophrenic by ignoring it."

Dart noted the Arts and Peace Festival will continue to shine a light on the militarism of the biennial air trade show, which occurs every second year.

The show — which runs in conjunction with the airshow — is one of the world's top aerospace trade shows and had a large military component, which trade show organizers are emphasizing for the first time.

Top military officials from countries around the world —

including countries like Indonesia and China with serious human rights abuses — attend the show. The military of every North, South and Central American country were represented at last year's show.

In 1996, the Canadian government sold 13 used F-5s to Botswana — a sale some defence analysts believe may fuel an arms race in southern Africa. The used fighter jets were advertised at the 1995 trade show — proving the link between the show and Canadian weapons exports to countries around the world, said David Thiessen, an Abbotsford peace activist and researcher.

Military forum

"Airshow Canada is, in the final analysis, a forum for the entire aerospace industry, civil and military, and all its customers, democratic or dictatorial," said Thiessen.

For as long as the airshow and trade show include heavy military components, Dart says, organizers of the Arts and Peace Festival will continue to remind people of the human cost those weapons exact.

"Our country has to have a conscience," he said.

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Comment

Two weeks that were



Bert Hielema

WELL, THE WEATHER has been the news, at least where I live. The ice storm came mighty close: areas just 25 km east of us were without power for a long time. Even though I have 10 solar panels and a small windmill, the long period without sunshine would not have been enough: I have bought a hand pump for our well.

With global warming and ever more powerful El Ninos, similar storms could easily happen again. For the rest, with some wood heat and a propane cookstove we probably would have managed. I am also thinking of buying a propane generator.

WE WERE NOT THE only ones who experienced unusual weather: a quick survey throughout the world shows that the south-central and southeastern United States is having an excess of rain this winter amounting to as much as 350 mm (14 inches) above normal, while the southern Caribbean and much of South America is usually warm and dry, with temperatures well above normal.

In Europe, too, winter temperatures have been six to nine degrees Celsius higher than usual, while England and France experienced tornadoes for the first time ever. In east-central Africa, especially Kenya, torrents of rain were reported, with some areas receiving up to 600 mm more than ever before.

Terribly cold weather also invaded Bangladesh, where hundreds of people died from exposure, while persistent heavy fog disrupted transportation. This severe chill came from Siberia where the temperature dipped to 15 degrees Celsius lower than usual. Some areas there reported minus 70 degrees Celsius.

So, we are not the exception: all over the world the weather has been crazy and in many cases, lousy.

SPEAKING ABOUT lousy, there is a lousy, nit-picking epidemic invading the U.S.

Head lice are making a comeback. In states as far apart as Iowa, Virginia and Oklahoma, parents and school officials are calling health officials, reporting that the standard lice-killing products are having little effect in killing *Pediculus humanus capitis*, the common human head louse.

I remember from my school days that at that time the cure was combing out the tiny eggs, called nits. It looks like that is still the only reliable cure. Just as with so many health products, such as penicillin, overexposure, in this case through shampoos with an anti-lice substance, has bred resistance.

JUST AS UNUSUAL weather is now a world-wide phenomenon, so are new diseases. As many as 30 new diseases have been identified in recent years. The germ of the problem of germs being the problem are imported foods, increased jet travel, eating out, poor hygiene and daycare, just to mention a few causes.

I heard of one patient who visited a doctor and was told that he had both bad news and good news to report to him: the bad news was that he had a new disease for which there was no cure. "The good news," said the doctor, "is that the disease has been named after you."

THE JAN. 3 ISSUE of *The New Scientist* says that in Britain, food poisoning has reached epidemic proportions. Up to one million people are estimated to be affected each year in Great Britain alone. How to avoid this? Cook meat and seafood thoroughly. Give fresh fruits and vegetables a vigorous cleaning. Wash hands frequently. Don't overuse antibiotics. Eat produce grown locally as much as possible, or even better, grow your own.

Organically grown food is now so popular in Great Britain that Britain's Ministry of Agriculture is considering paying farmers to convert to organic

farming. Germany and Austria already have 10 per cent of their land in organic production, while Denmark plans to reach 50 per cent. An organic farmer in England reported in the *Guardian Weekly* that he has to import 60 per cent of produce from the continent to satisfy demand from British supermarkets.

Organic farming employs twice as many people as conventional farming and is good for wildlife. I recommend that if you have to make a choice, the most important foods to buy organic, or grow yourself are: baby food, rice, oats, strawberries, bananas, peaches, apples.

IN CONNECTION WITH labor-intensive work, the NRC *Handelsblad*, based in Rotterdam, reported that the Dutch government has lowered the VAT (Value Added Tax; our GST), from 16 per cent to six per cent on labor intensive services such as shoe repair, tailoring, mending and art products to encourage increased human participation in the workforce. The double advantage is more manual labor and less energy use.

WHO ARE THE happiest people on earth? According to a study in *The Futurist* they are the people who live together on a happy-go-lucky island paradise. No, not somewhere in the South Pacific. On Iceland. Analyzing longevity statistics and public-opinion polls, Dutch psychologist Ruut Veenhoven concluded that Icelanders can expect to enjoy, on average, 62 years of happiness during their lifetimes — the highest of any country in the world, and almost double that of Russia, where folks put on a happy face for only 34.5 years. No mention of Canada in the report.

HERE IS SOMETHING interesting: *The Economist* reports that a doctor studying the relationship of smell to mate selection discovered that the aroma of certain fatty acids in persons is more important to mutual attraction than winning personalities or gorgeous eyes or physical features or resemblances to one of our parents. So, when you look for a mate, make sure that your olfactory organs are functioning well.

According to this study, most of the glands that produce these clues are located in the armpits, where hairs retain these secreted substances called pheromones. Washing and shaving may actually interfere here. Conclusion: the person with the

most body odor could end up with the most dates.

WHILE ON HEALTH issues: wine has been in the news lately. Of course we all know that the first miracle Jesus performed was to turn water into wine — not just grape juice, but wine that gladdens the heart. We are now discovering the benefits of an occasional glass. Recent findings indicate that a glass of vino now and then may decrease the risk of developing a potentially blinding eye disease.

Only four per cent of wine drinkers contracted AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration), compared to nine per cent of non-imbibers. Also, being a moderate drinker of any type of alcohol reduces the chances of heart disease and stroke. There is evidence that alcohol reduces the formation of clumps in the blood and may affect the level of fats and cholesterol.

Should I mention that men who have sex twice a week experience a risk of dying half of

that of participants who have sex only once a month? And smoking not only reduces the sex drive but also damages the sperm and increases by 30 per cent the risk of male smokers children developing cancer.

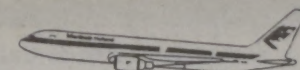
FURTHER ON SMOKING: the world's heaviest smokers are South Koreans, consuming 4,153 annual cigarettes per person. Then comes Japan, with 2,739; followed by Hungary with 2,689.

In Canada we smoke about 1,800 too many. In 1959, I saw a client of mine die of lung cancer. Even when he couldn't eat anymore, he kept smoking till his last breath. That's when I decided to quit. I remember being officer of the watch at the barracks in Assen, the Netherlands, in 1950 and in that 24-hour period smoked 80 cigarettes and was proud of it.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. Retired, without a spare tire.

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Editorial

Nostalgic people slow down the Second Coming

Last night, Alice and I listened to a CD she got from our son for Christmas. It was a performance by Garrison Keillor, well-known author of *Lake Wobegone Days*, who on the CD was accompanied by the Minnesota Orchestra. We were both struck by the nostalgia that listening to this CD evoked in us. Whether it was the wholesomeness of the humor homespun by Keillor or the fact that a respectable orchestra played a sophisticated version of "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so," I am not sure. It's not often these days that you hear a Christian message presented in a culturally respectable way.

Keillor talked about the fact that the harp and a percussion instrument would be the kind of instrument a Lutheran would play because a Lutheran understands about grace, and one needs grace to play instruments for which so little music has been written into the average orchestral score. "A percussionist may have to wait for 20 minutes just to play a few beats, but those beats have to be exact and they have to be passionate and climactic. All that the epistles of Paul say a Christian should be — faithful, waiting, trusting, filled with fervor —

are the qualities of the percussionist." One needs to be a saint to play a harp, says Keillor, because it "takes 14 hours to tune and remains in tune for 20 minutes or until somebody opens a door."

Keillor has a way of taking you out of this modern period and increasing your longing for "the good ol' days."

Don't look back

This morning I got up early to read some Scripture. It didn't take long for the second epistle of Peter to shake me out of this feeling of nostalgia and to instil in me a different longing. Peter talked about the day of the Lord, which will come like a thief in the night (2 Peter 3), and he says that we ought to live "holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Instead of nurturing my longing for the biggest part of my life on earth — my childhood, my teenage years, college days, our courtship and marriage and raising of children — Peter, and through him, God, points me to the future.

Wrapped up in that homesickness is the longing for a lost paradise.

At first blush, that future is not appealing: "The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare." It looks like it's going to be a bit noisy and hot on earth for some time. This is a picture of a cataclysm the likes of which we have not heard or seen on earth before. No Eastern Canada ice storm, B.C. avalanche or Manitoba flood measures up to that climactic finale of human history.

God wants us to look forward to that? Give me Garrison Keillor any day "sitting on green grass next to a bed of irises, feasting on sweet corn and bratwurst, drinking green nectar, talking about old times like they were back again" (introductory notes inside CD cover).

Why make time move faster?

But the words of Peter come out of a realization that there are no good ol' days at any time in human history, and that our greatest happiness waits for us in the good new days of the New Creation. At the moment these come to us in the form of promises, with a bit of a down payment from the Holy Spirit. If the past were the good ol' days, why would Peter talk about his times as characterized at least in part by corruption and evil desires (2 Peter 1:4)?

It's an interesting thought Peter puts forward when he says that we can actually speed up history by living godly lives and by eagerly expecting the day of the Lord. Apart from the

question of how we human beings can actually affect the Second Coming, we might ask whether we need to speed up things even more. Modern means of transportation and communication seem to hurry things up so much already. Why add to that restlessness?

But Peter is not talking about fueling the rat race. History does not move any faster anyway, no matter how we rush about. But God might move faster and the end might come more quickly because of our participation in the fulfilment of God's promises. Our prayers and our godly living influence God in his plan for this world. His cup of salvation is more quickly filled when more and more people do his will or cry out for the end.

Misplaced longing

But why should we cry for the end?

Because the nostalgia that my wife and I experienced the previous evening was simply a misplaced longing for a better world of the past. Inside that longing resides the pain of disappointment, the barb of lost hopes, the sting of hatred, the suffering caused by sickness and death, the hurt caused by our own sinfulness, the destruction wreaked by Satan's power in society. Peter redirects my longing when he urges me and others to look forward to a new earth and heaven, which he calls "the home of righteousness."

That's it. We are homesick for our home of righteousness. Wrapped up in that homesickness is the longing for a lost paradise. I am sure that God created within us the need to live in paradise. But God points us into the future, and urges us not to look back to where the angels bar the way to paradise. There is no point in reaching back to a past that never was nor in reaching forward to a utopia that never will be. Without losing interest in this world, we have to put our sights on the end of the journey.

I'll decline the pickles

What Peter recommends is essentially a dynamic life of growth. He ends his letter that way: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." People who give in to nostalgia don't grow anymore. They pickle themselves into a state of preservation. I must remember that as I grow a bit older every day. I don't want a pickled retirement when that comes. I love it when people in their 80s and 90s are still busy speeding up the day of the Lord. Maybe I will take up playing harp — good practice for later, anyway.

I will still listen to Garrison Keillor from time to time. The music is too good and the stories too enduring not to. But I will remember to relativize it or treat it as New-Earth longing meant to activate me.

BW

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Letters

Dropping foreign aid is not acceptable

While I deeply appreciate Mr. Ysselstein's forthrightness (Jan. 9) and agree with many of his criticisms of past foreign aid, I do feel an urgent need to caution CC readers to take a more balanced view in light of developments in the last 15 years.

Many of the issues Mr. Ysselstein raises in his article on foreign aid were issues I personally raised with staff of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian High Commission staff, U.S. Embassy staff and other agencies during the time that Mr. Ysselstein and I served together in Bangladesh.

Many of Mr. Ysselstein's conclusions are based on the foreign scene of more than 12 years ago. That scene has changed, and in no small part to the efforts of men like Mr. Ysselstein and other leaders in the private Non-Government Organization (NGO) arena. Even though it may have seemed like a "racket" then, I do feel that it does overstate the reality as I knew it then, and it is certainly out of context for the Canadian foreign aid situation today.

Much improved

Canadian foreign aid has changed in the face of criticism and has addressed many of the concerns with which Mr. Ysselstein, I and other CRWRC staff challenged CIDA. The CIDA of today well understands the shortcomings of government-to-government aid, or what is termed "bilateral aid." Such bilateral aid may be seen as: 1. propping up inefficient

and ineffective local government programs (Mr. Ysselstein's despots); 2. Focusing on "brick and mortar" projects rather than the harder to manage people-oriented, skill and knowledge-capacity-building efforts which are basic to good community development; 3. a forced hand to provide a market for Canadian goods, whether desirable or not (i.e. left drive F150 pickups made in Oakville for a right-hand drive country).

In fact, a study of CIDA-administered aid over the past 12 years reveals a much-improved picture. CIDA has deliberately worked its way out of bilateral aid agreements (which our dignitaries love to draw up to "favor" allies) and has increasingly re-directed the bulk of our foreign aid through Canadian-based international NGOs like MCC, World Vision, CARE, CRWRC (last year \$1.25 million for development aid and another \$1 million through our contributions in the Canadian Food Grains Bank) and many others.

Getting on CIDA's support list is no simple matter either. Every three years, each NGO with which CIDA partners undergoes a thorough and comprehensive evaluation (CRWRC has just gone through a four-month review by external evaluators).

Stewardship concern

We at CRWRC have nothing but respect for the men and women we deal with at CIDA. Holding CIDA ransom for past actions would be a gross injustice. Today's CIDA is much more successful in getting the best bang for our aid tax

dollars. And it is a privilege for us at CRWRC to administer some of these funds.

I agree with Mr. Ysselstein; pride (especially, international pride) ought not enter into the picture. However, stewardship should. Should not a country that has been richly blessed and near the top in terms of quality of living (according to the United Nations) also be a country that is strongly dedicated to a concern for fellow humanity? If our secular neighbors are guilty of selfishness, that can be understood. However, if

we who profess to walk in Jesus way excuse ourselves from giving, then there truly is no hope for humanity!

Therefore, I would gladly join in Mr. Ysselstein's call for more responsible aid, but I would not opt for no aid at all. Please write to your MP and let him or her know that you do not appreciate Canada's decline in international aid as a percentage of gross national product (GNP).

Rick DeGraaf
CRWRC — Canada
Burlington, Ont.

Don't buy into 'ultra-negative' foreign aid view

Regarding "former development worker questions foreign aid" (CC, Jan. 9). I think *Christian Courier* should have flatly refused to print this article. Mr. Peter Ysselstein is a good penman and he states his opinions well. He is obviously well educated and could pass an exam as a journalist.

Endowed with such a wonderful gift, his responsibility becomes that much greater to venture into a critical assessment about something as big as foreign aid and about our personal giving to causes that cry out for immediate help.

There are perhaps elements of truth in what he writes, especially where he laments the fact that in many countries the infrastructure is not in place to absorb and properly direct development funds. But nowhere in his writing do I detect a positive attitude towards any of the organizations that make a sincere attempt to relieve poverty and suffering.

In fact, Mr. Ysselstein's opinion piece is perfect fodder for the unconcerned who have just been handed another excuse to keep a clamp on their wallets. They can now point to a man with direct field experience and exclaim: "See what I mean?" What a horrible consequence to trigger.

I wonder to what extent Mr. Ysselstein's notions are shared by other workers at CRWRC, World Vision Canada and other groups that I consider to be bona fide organizations through which we can confidently channel our gifts when we despair about the starving children in North Korea or the wandering orphans in Rwanda.

I hope that Mr. Ysselstein's writing will prompt an avalanche of responses from people who simply cannot buy into his ultra-negative views.

George Visser
Sarnia, Ont.

Never again should abuse be covered up

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for keeping the nasty subject of sexual abuse alive. It is one of the ugliest of offences, and, yes, it is a crime. It is also one of the most pervasive as well as all-encompassing burdens for a victim to carry. I know what I am talking about since I was abused by my brother when I was in my teens.

We all know by now that the underlying diagnosis is a disgusting need for complete control of persons or situations in whatever form. That's why men who perceive themselves to always be in authority are so vulnerable. (I'm sure our patriarchal background is a very real contributor). This dysfunctional behavior could last a life-time and pop up in a myriad of manipulative, deceiving ways. The art and craftiness with which perpetrators cover up never ceases to amaze me.

I wish to send you a very strong vote of confidence intended to convey that this subject should never again be covered up. It has been hidden from public exposure and understanding far

too long.

In your editorial (CC Jan. 16) you indicated that three people responded negatively to the fact that you ran a short article reporting on a sexual abuse trial.

Despite our deep sadness and sorrow for this principal and his family, we were encouraged for obvious reasons that you had the courage to print the article. Abuse is generally not about a "weak moment" or about a "short-coming" or even about "misguided good intent." It is a public crime.

One wonders about the agenda of a person calling in anger, threatening to "wring" the editor's neck. Thank you for not surrendering to idle threats like that.

I, for one, am deeply grateful for the exposure that you have given this subject ever since your first article about "Susan" appeared way back in 1986. I remember the relief I felt at the time finding something in print about it. That article sure struck a chord with me.

Keep up the great work you do, and thanks again.

Name Withheld.

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Opinion

Borgdorff responds to Tamming's 18 questions

I am happy to respond to the substance of Mr. Tamming's questions (CC, Jan. 9) without necessarily commenting on all of his perceptions. The concerns he expresses have been addressed by the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church, and the answers to the questions reflect the position of the board. Mr. Tamming's questions are fair and I will address them as best as I can.

My earlier dialogue with Mr. Tamming was totally unrelated to the matters that concern us now. The difficulties we are experiencing with IRM are real, and I might add, most unfortunate. However, to connect the present discussion to our previous exchange about mission strategy is a stretch.

It is true that the board of trustees decided that the denomination's periodical *The Banner* should not engage in "investigative reporting" with reference to IRM because of the legal complications that could arise from the CRC's own magazine pursuing such a course. This decision of the board has nothing to do with any position of the board on the subject of information disclosure or non-disclosure relative to our IRM concerns.

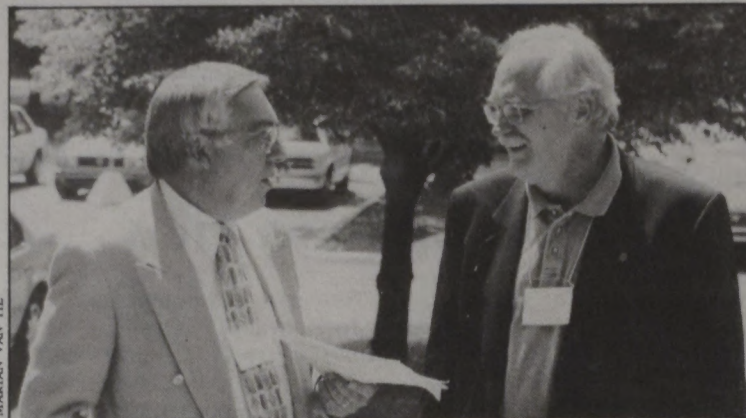
Neither did I ever say "that it would not be useful to disclose any information to the church at this time...." As a matter of fact, we have sent two disclosure statements to every local CRC church council in both Canada and the United States, and further information will be sent to the churches as it becomes available. Neither the board of trustees nor any of its staff are seeking to hide anything about this whole matter. With these comments out of the way I will respond to his questions.

1. What is the relationship between the CRC board of trustees (past and present) and IRM?

None. No member of the board, or any of its staff, has or had any involvement with IRM. In fact, the investments in question were not made by the board. The board of trustees is involved only because three of the agencies have such investments and, therefore, it has become an issue for the board to address.

2-5 Do conflict of interest guidelines exist for the investment of church money?

Yes, as it applies to employees. Several agencies have their own such policies, while others use the guidelines of common sense and trusteeship. I expect that as a result of the IRM experience more specific uniform guidelines will be adopted so that both the actual and the perception of a "conflict of interest" can be avoided.



Peter Borgdorff (l.) with Ben Vandezande of Diaconal Ministries.

At this time no one is alleging that an actual "conflict of interest," in fact, occurred. However, it is possible that such a conflict will be shown to have occurred once all of the facts become known. I suspect that, if that is the case, the conflict was caused more by "too much trust" rather than "evil intent."

6. How much church money is invested?

Three agencies had a total of 11.5 million (U.S.) temporarily invested in IRM. Most of the agencies have some resources to invest because certain funds are restricted, some are designated, and most agencies receive bequests of which only the earned income may be used for operations.

Calvin College has significant invested resources (about \$55 million) mainly because of the generosity of Calvin College supporters and the need to fund scholarships and other programs. Most of the other agencies have amounts significantly smaller (from nothing to \$14 million), depending on which agency is being discussed.

Until now, each agency managed its own resources and made its own investment decisions. The board of trustees recently changed that by adopting a revised investment policy and by consolidating the management of all investments, with the exception of Calvin College's and the Pension Fund's resources. Only Calvin College,

the Back to God Hour and Home Missions had investments in IRM.

7-11 Are we secured investors?

That depends which investment is under consideration. Yes, much of the investments in IRM are secured, but not all.

IRM offered different kinds of investments at different rates of return, and not all of the agencies' investments are of the same kind. Some are equity investments, but most are interest-bearing loans which are secured by the properties being funded.

But when one has a "secured" interest in a property having more debt attached to it than its current market value, "security" brings little comfort.

According to synodical policy, unsecured investments are inappropriate. As a matter of fact, synodical policy actually did not permit IRM-like investments at all. Preservation of principal is considered the most important by denominational policy and, therefore, real estate investments are considered too speculative.

Why then was denominational money invested with IRM? That is the question the board of trustees is asking. Steps have already been taken to prevent it from happening again.

IRM is continuing to operate under scrutiny by a creditors committee. There is hope that a portion of IRM's assets can be preserved and the extent of losses to investors minimized.

It may take time, and it will take patience. A creditors committee has been appointed and it is working with IRM management to determine what can be done to improve the chances of investment recovery. This committee represents the interests of all of the investors, including investments of CRC agencies.

At this point in time we do not have IRM's financial statements. However, the creditors committee will have access to all records in the near future and will perform such analysis and review needed so that the situation can be more fully understood.

12. Who made the decision to invest in this corporation and when?

Several of the agencies have been investing in IRM for nearly 10 years. We are seeking to determine precisely who made what decision, but preliminary information suggests that the respective agency boards did approve these investments.

As is to be expected, several staff members, as well as board members, who recommended or approved such investments, are no longer in their positions. Those who still are, and who had involvement in the investment decisions dealing with IRM, will be held accountable. There is a review underway of these matters, and the results will be presented to the board of trustees.

13-16 Are there guidelines which govern the types of investments in which church funds may be invested?

Yes, there are. Synod 1965 adopted, and Synod 1990 slightly modified, the investment guidelines for denominational funds. Frankly stated, these guidelines were violated when IRM investments were made. The board of trustees became aware of these violations some time ago, and proceeded to review the guidelines before deciding to enforce compliance.

At the December 1997 meeting the board approved new investment guidelines which, incidentally, do not make provisions for IRM-like investments. The new investment policy was not adopted because of the present IRM difficulties, but the policy was developed because of concern about IRM-like investments.

17. Who knew what/when about the financial state of this corporation?

Actually, the financial difficulties of IRM caught many, if not all, investors by surprise. There is reason to believe that even large individual investors with close ties to the owners of

IRM did not know that the company was in trouble. All investors were notified in a letter from IRM dated Oct. 27, 1997.

18. What steps, if any, were made, and when were they made, in order to minimize our exposure?

The Oct. 27, 1997, letter arrived at our offices Oct. 30, 1997. That very same day the executive committee of the board of trustees summoned into special session by conference call, appointed an investment oversight committee and mandated it to handle all matters related to IRM. This committee later became instrumental in organizing a creditors committee. Some of the persons who serve on the investment oversight committee now also serve on the creditors committee.

The operations of IRM are currently severely restricted, and it is expected that no payments of interest or distribution can be made until the company is stabilized. The best thing we can do to "minimize our exposure" is to help keep the company out of bankruptcy court, if possible. Our representatives, who are very competent professionals in their own right, are making every effort to that end.

I understand Mr. Tamming's disappointment. I read his intensity between the lines. There are thousands of us who wish the situation was otherwise. There is no doubt that some investment decisions were contrary to official policy. The board of trustees is responsible for handling this matter on behalf of the church. It may well be that it will call certain individuals to account.

However, Mr. Tamming's language of "apparent mismanagement" is too strong. We have found evidence that rules and advice were not followed. We have found no evidence, at this time, that would warrant a label that comes even close to "mismanagement."

Everything that can be done will be done to help all the investors, the majority of whom (1500+) we believe may be members of the CRC. Please pray for the Lord's guidance as we continue to deal with this difficult issue.

Peter Borgdorff,
Exec. Director of Ministries
Christian Reformed Church
in North America
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Environment/Children's Books

Remembering a faithful steward

His generation learned the hard lessons of conservation. There was the deadly cost of not caring for the soil in the "dirty 30s" of his youth. So they came to cherish the little things. But while cleaning out the basement I complained about "all that junk. He seemed to keep everything!"

His was no consumer generation! They were reluctant to use something once and throw it away. If a shoddy item malfunctioned there was always hope it could be fixed. If beyond repair, it became the grist of spare parts. Every nut, bolt, screw, washer and widget was worth something, sometime. So into an empty milk carton, or plastic container it went.

My father's world

But his lessons on the worth of things went far beyond nuts and bolts. Dad was an avid gardener and orchardist. His skill came from close experience with the land, not books. He wasn't interested in perfection, or even maximizing production. It was enough to get "a decent crop." That meant enough to pay for the seed, put up canning for

the winter, and give some away.

He practiced organic gardening (mostly) long before it was a household word. The bugs, birds and deer always got a goodly share. He planned on it — planting more than they or we could ever possibly eat. I learned early that gardens were for sharing. We simply ate around the damaged spots. Or failing that, he would wink and "add a bit of protein" to the pot.

These lessons came to me piecemeal, not packaged neatly like a textbook lecture. They arrived as they arose from our experience, and were reinforced by 40 years of repetition.

Somehow he still managed to plow and plant the garden this past spring. He was too sick to tend it much through the summer. But in October we had a final meal from that good plot of ground. The cabbages were huge and the corn was typically stunted but as sweet as candy! The green beans came in fairly well, and there are carrots "wintering" in that ground.

Giving away was part of the purpose of a garden. Over the years Dad would invite almost everyone he met to come by and

help themselves to the harvest. If they didn't show up he often bagged the produce and took it around. A visitor seldom drove away empty handed from our place. It all depended on what was in season: cherries or berries in early summer; apples, carrots, onions, beans, corn, potatoes or cabbage later on. And when, in his retirement, he took up bee-keeping and re-built the apple press the offerings got more diverse.

Passing on a stewardly mantle

The old maple tree in our yard is gone now. A mere remnant remains — a limbless, broken stump where once stood a lively, multi-branched tree. That tree had stories to tell. It witnessed flying squirrels, pileated woodpeckers, red squirrels, wood ducks, barn swallows and red-shafted flickers, among many others.

Raccoons, opossums, skunks and cotton-tailed rabbits all played about the base of that tree at various times. And when Dad set out bird feeders, the towhees, pigeons, morning doves all arrived. But the most

Creation waits...



John Wood

daring guests were the raucous rufous hummingbirds. Their aerial displays were always a delight and we were even treated to a nesting pair on occasion. Now that old tree, like my father, has passed on, leaving behind a rich memory for us.

Dad had built deep relationships with many in our small town. He taught young boys how to "live in the woods." And more than that he taught them how to be Christian men in a changing, challenging world. Those lessons are now being applied in countless ways. And that is the genius of the gospel story. It isn't about "the environment," or even simply about "getting saved." It is about living our lives in relationship with our Creator, each other, and the creatures God cares for, too.

And as the century ends it is up to another generation to appropriate the lessons of the past. To translate the message of Scripture into contemporary terms. To learn to live well in the land, not defiling it or ourselves. I hope and pray that we can do as well as the generations that have preceded us. There is a great cloud of witnesses, and all the creatures too, waiting to see what we will do.

On Jan. 5, at the age of 89, Connie C. Wood went to live with Christ. As a husband, father, soldier and plain citizen, he was a good steward of the gifts God so richly gave him — a blessing on his memory.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The Kings University College, Edmonton.

Children's Books

Joseph: visually resplendent book of many colors



Marian Van Til

Joseph

Written and illustrated by Brian Wildsmith

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997. 40 pp, hardcover picture book. \$20 (US).

If it takes not just an exciting story but dazzling illustrations, too, to get young computer- and television-weaned kids to get engrossed in a book nowadays, then this book will surely do the trick.

Brian Wildsmith not only wrote this retelling of the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers, but lavishly illustrated it as well.

Wildsmith, an Englishman who now lives in France with his wife and children, is a former military school math teacher and art teacher who now spends his time painting and illustrating children's books, for which artistry he has gained an international reputation.

It's easy to see why. One fancies that the phenomenal detail in his illustrations owe to his

military school years.

These are not just pretty pictures a child (or adult reading the book to a child) will glance at for a moment before turning the page to move on.

These are illustrations over which he or she will want to linger, to discover and marvel at more and more of the intricate detail and to revel in the pleasing color contrasts.

Those qualities also make the book a treasure for looking at again and again without inducing boredom.

Needs more suspense

If the "pictures" are exceptional, the story told in Wildsmith's words are slightly less so.

While for the most part he sticks closely to the biblical

account, Wildsmith's telling of the story doesn't build in suspense as the biblical account does, even when you've heard it dozens of times.

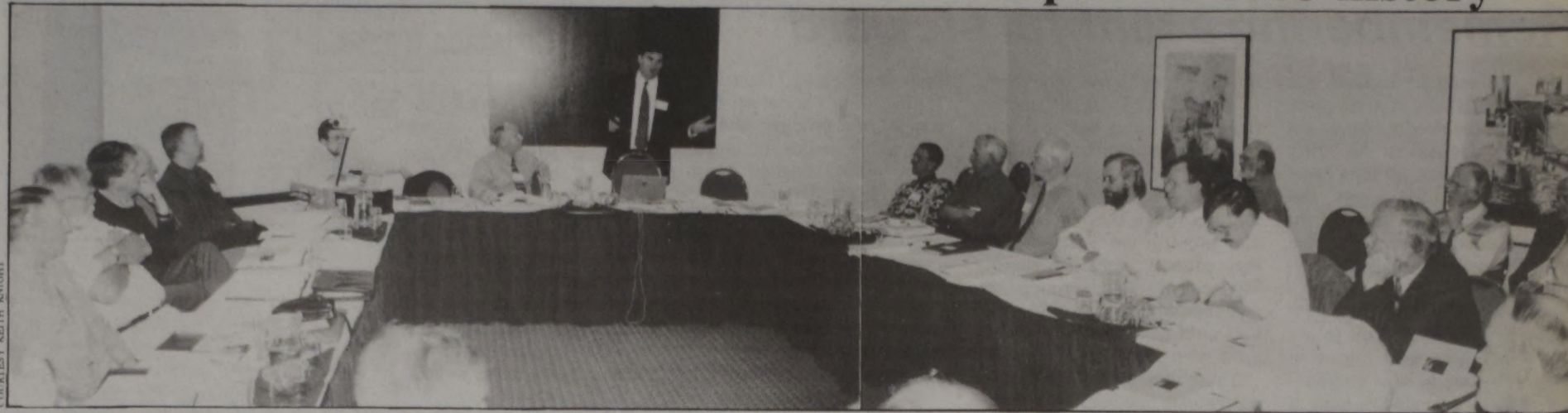
Perhaps that's because he omits important details here and there (the brothers' astonishment when Joseph seats them in birth-order at the feast he prepares for them, to cite one example).

Still, this book is well worth having in the library of your lower elementary- or preschool children, and in church and Christian school libraries.

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Church

Canadian Ministries Board launches new chapter in CRC history



The inaugural meeting of the Canadian Ministries Board of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Keith Knight

TORONTO (CRWRC) — When the Canadian Ministries Board of the Christian Reformed Church in North America held its inaugural meeting on Jan. 16 and 17, it marked the end of one era and the beginning of another.

The board replaces the 20-year-old Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, a voluntary association of Canadian classes. That chapter will be formally closed when its first and only executive secretary, Rev. Arie Van Eek, retires this

summer.

The board will oversee the domestic and international ministries of the agencies of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. At its inaugural meeting in Toronto, Rev. Peter Nicolai of Chatham, Ont., was elected president, Rev. William Veenstra of Maple Ridge, B.C., vice-president, and Langley, B.C., businessman Joe De Vries, secretary.

The 12-member board consists of one representative from each of the 12 Canadian classes. The board has the option of

appointing up to five at-large members with specialized expertise.

Looking for a new leader

At the inaugural meeting, members heard presentations from each of the church's agencies as part of an overview of the denomination's ministries.

One of the first orders of business was the creation of a search committee to interview from a list of nine candidates for the

Canadian Ministries director's position. That person will oversee Canadian ministry and will also act as spokesperson and representative for the denomination in a variety of settings. Once that person is selected by the board, his or her name will be presented to the Christian Reformed Church's binational synod in June for approval.

The search committee consists of the three officers plus pastors Herman Praamsma of

Brampton, Ont., and Bob Haven of London, Ont., and Stephanie Baker Collins of St. Catharines, Ont.

When the board meets in March it will look at the structure, membership and authority of three standing ministry committees which will deal with international and domestic ministries as well as church development.

Most admired men named

PRINCETON, N.J. (EP) — Rev. Billy Graham was once again among the top 10 in the Gallup Poll's annual survey of the "most admired people living in the world today." Graham was second on the list only to U.S. President Bill Clinton (in

almost every year the sitting American president has been named the most admired man). It was Graham's 34th consecutive appearance in the top 10. Pope John Paul II was third on the list.

Dutch synod says prof 'not careful enough' about atonement

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — A Kampen theologian has caused a stir in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland — GKN) with his view of the atonement.

According to New Testament professor C.J. den Heyer, the classic doctrine of atonement does not appear in the New Testament. In his recent book *Atonement: Biblical Notes on a Contested Theme*, den Heyer concludes that the idea that Christ's death once for all removed the guilt of human sin is not in the Bible.

Readers protested

The book was written for a popular audience and is being read by many in the GKN. Den Heyer teaches at Kampen Theological University, one of two schools at which the GKN trains its pastors.

Many readers protested to GKN officials. Among the protests was a letter signed by 92 pastors from the Confessional Reformed Council, who asked that den Heyer be disciplined.

As a result, Kampen curators studied the work and concluded

that den Heyer had not gone beyond the bounds of the subscription formula required by the university.

The GKN synod debated the issue late last year and agreed with the curators, but added that den Heyer had "not been careful enough" about the relation between the biblical text and Christian dogma. The synod also suggested it would have been better for den Heyer to try out his ideas first on an academic audience before writing a popular book.

Synod delegates were divided over the impact of den Heyer's book. Some found it disturbing; others thought it "stimulating" and "liberating."

When the final vote in favor of den Heyer had been taken, many who liked the outcome applauded. But the applause had repercussions. The secretary of the Reformed Alliance, J. van der Graaf, said the applause "cut to his Reformed soul." However, GKN moderator Richard Vissinga, known to CRC in north America members for including in a greeting to the CRC synod controversial remarks in favor of homosexual relationships, interpreted the applause as being


for the manner in which the discussion was held.

Vissinga hoped that den Heyer, in his next book, would look more closely at the process and situation in which doctrine is formed.

Muslim schools get funding in Britain

LONDON, England (EP) — For the first time, Britain's Education Secretary has agreed to state funding for Islamic schools. The decision by David Blunkett came after years of pressure from Britain's 1.5 million-member Muslim community.

Britain already funds schools run by the Church of England, Roman Catholics and Jews. The decision was welcomed by the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, John Barton, who said, "It is vitally important that no community should be the victim of unjust discrimination."



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Church

Hong Kong Bible couriers a 'disappearing breed'

HONG KONG (Compass) — "Prophets of Doom" are to blame for a dramatic fall in the number of couriers willing to travel to Hong Kong after the July 1 handover and take Bibles into China, according to a recent newsletter of Revival Christian Church, a large independent charismatic church in Hong Kong that continues to have a literature ministry to Chinese house churches.

'Donkeys for Jesus'

Writes Pastor Dennis Balcombe, "During most of 1996 and the first part of 1997, daily up to 100 overseas Christians were working as 'Donkeys for Jesus' delivering Bibles to China.... Since July 1 the numbers have dropped to only a few dozen a week."

Balcombe blamed "prophets of doom" for painting an apocalyptic scenario about the changeover, alleging that the negative picture of the former British colony was scaring off potential couriers.

This was a spiritual tragedy, he argued, because "...tens of thousands of freshly delivered Bibles would now be circulating in China to be used in training leaders and evangelizing the lost."

Just as free now?

In contrast to the doomsayers, Balcombe professes confidence that Beijing will live up to its part of the bargain of "one country, two systems." He declares, "Hong Kong is as free as under British rule," and added that he felt China would be a free country eventually.

As for the controversial tactic of taking Scriptures from Hong Kong into the mainland without declaring them at customs, the position of his church's ministry is to say simply, "We do not believe simply delivering Bibles to Christians is interfering in the affairs of Chinese believers." Balcombe's ministry has smuggled literally hundreds of thousands of Scriptures into China since the late 1970s.

No stranger to controversy, Balcombe is still barred from entering China because he was deported in 1994 while leading house church seminars, though he hopes to be allowed to enter China again soon. Some other courier ministries have also found their numbers declining after the handover, though one said, "It's been a good year in

total because everybody who wanted to take Bibles to China made sure they came before the handover."

Controversial tactic

Taking Bibles across the border in China without declaring them remains a controversial tactic, though it is not technically illegal. Customs officials, if they discover a cache of Scriptures, issue a chit and the couriers may pick them up as they exit. They cannot be confiscated. Others argue, however, that the tactic is as good as illegal since it violates a cardinal principle in Hong Kong's basic law, where Hong Kong churches are enjoined to practise a policy of "non-interference" towards the Chinese church.

Debate remains fierce over whether the tactic is actual necessary. Representatives of the Amity Foundation in China chastise Bible smugglers as irresponsible adventurers, claiming that the 17 million Bibles now printed by the Amity Bible press can take care of the need for Scriptures adequately.

Defenders of the tactic of undeclared publishing and delivery claim however that even these projects, impressive though they may be, still do not begin to deal with the Scripture needs of a Christian community that may well number over 60 million.

In the words of one mission worker, "The best way to give a Bible to a Chinese Christian is still to put it into their hands yourself, and cut out all the corruption and control that comes from using official middlemen."

Are you tired of angels?

There's an advertisement on television in which a car dealer tells an unhappy car owner how good things could be if the unhappy man would only buy the right automobile. Thrilled by the good news, the unlucky car owner says, "Mister, are you an angel?" and the response is: "No, you've watched too many movies."

Nowadays you see many angels when you watch many movies. One of my granddaughters loves "Touched by an Angel" and her mother thinks that this is at least a TV program in which people are taught by heavenly messengers to act kindly and to do what is right.

Actually I have never been very interested in angels. It's not that I doubt their existence. From my experience I could mention only one or two incidents when God's angels interfered miraculously for the protection of my family. From my Bible study I know that angels exemplify obedience: that's why we pray that God's will be done on earth as the angels do it in heaven. But I have never really studied what the Bible teaches about angels.

Angels are ministers of justice

Then I read the book by Andrew J. Bandstra, *In the Company of Angels: What the Bible Teaches, What you Need to Know* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications 1995). On page 82 Dr. Bandstra tells me why I had lost interest in angels: You "often think of angels as roly-poly cherubs or wimpish goody-goodies," he writes; and I had to admit that he expressed my feelings. A particularly sweet style of ceramics and birthday cards called "Precious Moments" consists of angelic figurines. And at Christmas time we put bedsheets and wings on the most innocent looking kids in church and call them "a great company of the heavenly host (= army!)" Luke 2:13. However, in his two most revealing chapters (8 and 9) Bandstra calls the angels God's "ministers of justice."

Angels have a role in law-giving. And they execute justice on law-breakers. In Egypt the angel of death acts as the Destroyer or Ter-

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
● Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

minator. The angel also executes God's judgment in the plague that hits God's people after David had taken the census (2 Sam. 24:15-17).

When supreme injustice was done to Jesus, more than 12 legions of these warriors were ready to intervene (Matt. 26:53). When Herod acted as if he were God-like, an angel of the Lord "struck him down" (Acts 12:23).

When Jesus was crowned Lord of all (his ascension), Michael and his angels hurled the dragon and his angels down to earth (Rev. 12:7-12).

And when Jesus comes again, he will return with his angels who will execute justice and separate the tares from the wheat; they will throw everything that causes sin into the fiery furnace (Matt. 13:41-42).

Based mainly on Hebrews 2, Bandstra teaches that the present world order has been entrusted to angelic beings but the new world order will be under the direct administration of God's Son, Jesus Christ. This is a fascinating insight that you and your Bible study group might want to investigate.

Angels have no independent initiatives but always act in obedience to God's instructions. Angels are our fellow creatures who teach us to bow before God alone (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). Angels serve and protect us at God's command.

If you give too much attention to angels, your religion becomes unbiblical. But if you don't pay attention to angels, your faith does not embrace what God has revealed.

Andrew Bandstra is a reliable scholar and excellent teacher. His book on angels is available from CRC Publications in Grand Rapids, Mich., and in Burlington, Ont.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired pastor of the Christian Reformed Church who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich. — in the company of angels.

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Personal Experience

For Amanda

Jonathan Fenske

It was as good a day as any to go to church, but it was not a Sunday morning or Wednesday night, so he sat in the limousine feeling odd in his church clothes, the clip from his clip-on tie pushing dents into his sweaty neck. The wind wrapped itself gently around the vehicle, rocking it occasionally, and the sun fell wearily into the seats, tired from a morning of fighting through the clouds.

He was fascinated by the car. He had never been in a limousine before, and the plush seats and overly attentive drivers made him feel like someone special. But this was not a special occasion, and as he looked across his feet to his mom, whose eyes were wet and red with tears, he was drawn back into the reality of the moment, and he tried again to comprehend it.

He had been roller skating when his sister died, and he felt an odd guilt about this as he thought of the rink floor whizzing by while he held on, the last link in the human chain, off-balance and going way too fast. He imagined her suffering six-hundred miles away, holding on to the last bit of fight she had, like he had held on to the rink railing, scared to go back out among the confident skaters. He had been out of control, and he did not like that feeling, and he now understood the fear his sister must have felt. But somewhere she had let go, as he had let go, realizing the advantages, no longer afraid to immerse himself in the unknown.

He had come home excited about sharing his skating experiences with his stand-in parents, Bruce and Wilma, aging missionary neighbors who volunteered to watch him and his older brother while his parents were in Washington. They listened politely, and he did not sense their sadness until Wilma said, "That is good news. But I've got some bad news. Your sister died this morning."

This was so abrupt, so matter-of-fact, he turned to his brother to see if it were true. But his brother's wet eyes retreated to the window, so he found no

*You came to us in grace
on steps of stars,
your smile a flash of moonbeam on wet pavement,
your eyes the careless waltz of sun and mist.
You charmed without words.
Loved without fear.
Suffered without understanding.
You were a falling star against a jet-black curtain of night,
here, briefly,
then gone to a place only painted in memories.
You left, unannounced, on the backs of whispered prayers,
swept into heaven so quickly.*

*I held your hand
and kissed your cheek after you were gone,
crying because I could not make it better.*

*But while I breathe, you breathe.
Held in the wrinkles of thought,
wound in the tangle of life,
wandering with me in loneliness.*

comfort there.

He did not cry then, only sat in silence, the morning activities disappearing behind the curtain of reality. She was his first sister. He had watched with an innocent curiosity as his mom changed her diapers, and he had noticed and memorized the differences. He had listened to her late-night cries, not knowing they were laced with pain. He had watched as her color changed from pale pink to yellow, the color of parchment, and had hoped with everyone that it was nothing serious. But her liver's bile ducts did not function, and her body was being slowly poisoned.

A third of her short life was spent away from him, in the confines of a children's hospital where others dealt with problems they were too young to understand. Mom and Dad went with her, keeping a constant vigil.

He had at first thought the neighbors' house was an adventure with its attic loft and African mementos. But he was scared of Wilma's mother-in-law, an old woman held hostage in her bed with tubes and the smell of medicine. Death

hovered over her, and he felt it, and tried his best to stay from underneath its cloud.

Now the hovering death had claimed his sister, but he would not have avoided her, did not, in fact, avoid her as she lay still and silent in her coffin. They had told him she was gone, but he wanted to make sure, and he sent them from the viewing room as he bent nervously to kiss her cheek.

There was no give to her skin as his lips pressed into it, only a cold and waxy surface that did not respond. She was a doll in a lacy white dress, not even a very good likeness of the Amanda he had known, and he hoped she looked down on him from heaven and understood his doubt. He turned from her and saw the eyes of his family. They had seen him, and were crying, and he felt ashamed.

The eyes of the congregation were on them, and as they made their way down the aisle the whole church stood. He smiled and waved at some familiar faces, until he saw their tears, and something inside him pulled his hand down and changed his expression. This was no time for pleasant exchanges.

His feet dangled from the pew, and he wished they could touch the floor like his brother's did, and he wished someone could explain the song the man was singing: "God never moves without purpose or plan...." He heard an assistant pastor lie about the concern he had shown for their family, and he wished someone would explain that, too. His sister's coffin lay underneath this man, and it was closed. He regretted he had told the funeral director he did not wish to see her again that morning, for he now knew there would be no other chance.

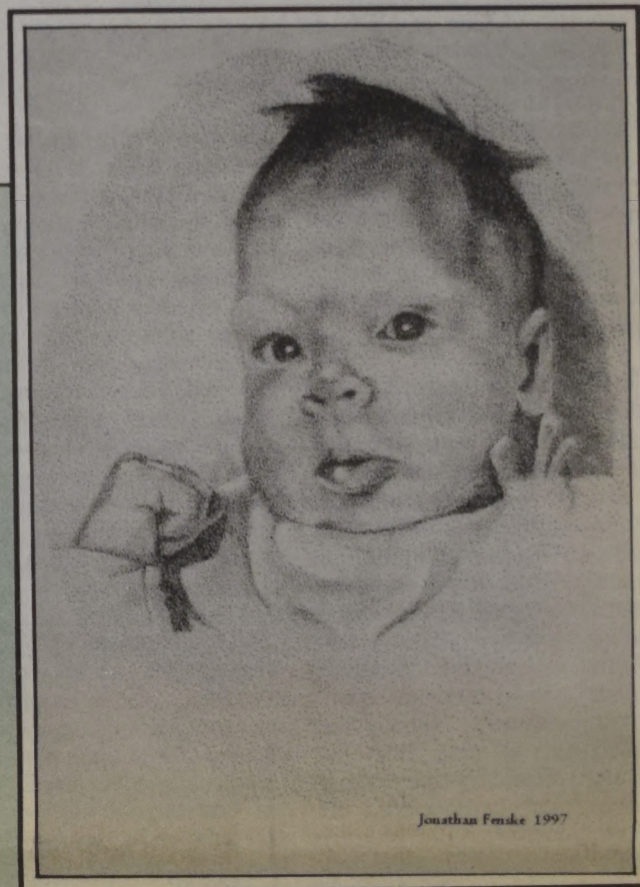
The congregation rose again as they filed out, and this time more of them were crying. His family climbed into the waiting limousine, and they rode to the cemetery in silence behind the lights of a police car. He hoped the siren would mourn just once for his sister, but the lights taunted him with their continued hush.

The canopy flaps were clapping against the aluminum frame, an out of place applause that made him mad. He was mad at everything right now: mad at the pastor who kept on talking, mad at the sad-eyed smiles from

people who could not understand. His sister sat among them, in a box on top of an Astroturf and flower-camouflaged mound. He knew the mound was dirt that would soon cover her, and he wanted to open the coffin and kiss her one more time and tell her he was sorry he had roller-skated while she suffered, tell her he would like to hold her again, tell her he would be nice to the old, sick woman in the bed.

But the moment had passed; the people were crowded around them, their hands heavy on his shoulders, and the tide of concern was carrying him away. He looked back between the dark pant legs and black coattails, and caught glimpses of the bright flowers that leaned sideways in the growing breeze. "That is how I will remember her," he decided, crying as he turned to his mother and father, and he heard the snort of the backhoe as it shuddered to a start.

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Jonathan Fenske 1997

Personal Musings

Plunged into darkness:

understanding the logic of a freak icestorm

Michael R. Geisterfer

Since arriving in this small western Quebec town nearly five years ago, we've survived a tornado that cut a clean swathe through the centre of town, a flood that engulfed our house and hundreds of others, a flurry of blizzards, one political referendum that nearly cut the country in two, and now an ice-storm that in four short days has brought a hundred years of technological progress to a bone-chilling standstill. If I didn't know better, I'd think God had it in for us.

The destruction around us is truly awesome. Massive hydro pylons, icons of a society addicted to electricity, lie crumpled in the snow, brought down by nothing more than water droplets that froze on contact with the pylons' shiny surfaces. It's not just pylons either. Magnificent trees that for decades spread their branches proudly in our neighborhoods now stand dismembered, their severed limbs dangling from high-tension wires that will inevitably snap under the weight.

It's a sorrowful sight. In our own backyard, the gnarled beech tree that provided shade in the summertime, and branches for the kids to swing from, has been splayed in two. Bowing under the weight of the ice, it now lies mortally wounded two feet from the edge of the house, an innocent victim of a mysterious celestial battle.

Blame God

Apparently two massive air masses, one dense and bitterly cold from Labrador, the other hot and humid from the Gulf of Mexico met in our backyard and wreaked havoc. I haven't phoned my insurance agent yet, but I already know what he'll tell me: It's God's fault. In situations like this, it always is. Whether a hurricane off the coast of Florida or a volcano on the island of Montserrat, God invariably gets the blame for the random destruction of the natural elements. As the preacher put it this morning, God speaks a Word and the storm moves into place.

Of course, it may not be quite that simple. This icestorm, for

example, probably wouldn't rate as the storm of the millennium if we weren't so dependant on electricity. A thousand years ago our foreparents might barely have noticed its impact.

As for tornados, does God really direct their path, or are they as subject to the laws of probability as we are? Most of us would probably like to believe that he does. It's a comforting notion, reinforcing our sense of coherence in the universe, and the fact that someone is in control.

Why some and not others?

It does raise an interesting question about the nature of divine control.

If God does direct the paths of hurricanes and tornados and ice storms, what are the criteria he uses to destroy one house, for example, over another? What was it about the island of Montserrat that caught his particular fancy? Why did he cause my tree to fall down while my

neighbor's is still standing? Why do some people die in natural disasters while others are left untouched?

The underlying assumption of these queries is that there must be some inherent logic in the universe. Things must happen for a reason. Thus when something good happens to us we thank God, believing that he has somehow chosen us to be recipients of a special blessing. When something bad happens we search our souls, secretly wondering for which of our many sins we are being punished.

The logic guiding these thoughts is the basis of Isaac Newton's third law, that of causality in the universe. Most of us unwittingly subscribe to this law because it seems to make so much sense. Yet even science itself has begun to realize that Newtonian physics cannot explain the entirety of reality. There are simply too many phenomena that defy explanation, and many things that cannot even be analyzed using the traditional instruments of

scientific investigation. Like miracles for example, and simple altruism. Generosity. Acts of kindness.

Albert Einstein was one of the first to go beyond the simpler Newtonian paradigm to posit that certain events happen that have an inherent logic all their own, one that cannot be scrutinized by our primitive tools of investigation.

God was there

As fine instruments as our human intellects are, they are still quite limited in terms of what they can understand. Sometimes the heart is better able of understanding that which baffles the mind. All this is by way of saying that God could be in control, but his logic may be far different from that which we imagine. I know for myself that my most painful experiences in life have brought me closer to others, and thus to God.

Since the storm began, we have personally been inundated with calls from all over the

country from people wanting to help. Friends have opened their homes to us. Businesses have offered free meals. The province of Quebec has witnessed an outpouring of generosity and goodwill that continues to see total strangers inviting one another into their homes, and business owners putting aside their profit motives to aid those in need.

If God was seemingly absent in his ability to stop the storm, he was present in the numerous acts of goodwill and warmth that spread like wildfire throughout the communities afflicted by the catastrophe. For me personally, there is something meaningful about this, some inherent logic that defies my ability to understand why or how it all happened.

Still, I'll be glad when it's all over. There's nothing better than routine and predictability in one's life. You don't realize how comforting they are until they are gone, and how tenuous it all is.

Michael Geisterfer is a journalist and writer who lives in Avlmer, Quebec.



Feature

A Catholic synod in Rome: *Regional synod with a difference*



The synod gets under way.

George VanderVelde

Imagine a synod ...

† which is regional but the region it covers stretches almost from the South Pole to the North Pole;

† which represents the whole continent of the Americas but meets in Rome;

† at which guards in vivid yellow and black uniforms and black berets snap their salute and click their boot heels each time a synod members passes;

† at which one addressed as "Your Holiness" is the convener and president but who appoints three bishops as "delegated presidents" who actually chair the meetings by rotation;

† whose president is flatly against women in church office but who hears more women address him and the synod than are heard at, say, a Christian Reformed synod;

† whose voting members have been appointed to their office of bishop or cardinal by none other than the president of the synod;

† whose members wear colorful robes, scarlet for cardinals and mauve for bishops;

† whose non-voting members include an Indian chief and a former President of Colombia;

† which lasts for four weeks but makes no decisions that are "settled and binding" for anyone;

† at which a certain dead mike does the hatchet job on too lengthy speeches;

† which issues a message that opens with a stirring confession of faith and proceeds to address issues such as international debt,

the gunning down of street children, and prostitution;

† at which every session cardinals, archbishops, bishops, monsignors, prefects — all except the Pope — sign an attendance card and hand it back immediately to the waiting steward;

† which holds its daily sessions from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m., leaving a wonderful gap in the middle for work (or a nap).

Getting in is hard to do

If you can imagine the above, you have gone some way towards getting into the Synod for America, which was held in Rome from Nov. 16 to Dec. 12, 1997.

Actually getting in is not that easy. The Synod is held in Vatican City, where the security has been stepped up since the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II a few years ago. Police cruisers are parked outside each gate, the doors usually open, and inside are two police armed with automatic weapons, one of them at the ready.

The gates themselves are flanked by the colorful Swiss guards, who bar anyone without a pass. Inside the gates, at the entrance and in the corridors of the Synod Hall, more Swiss guards, as well as men in grey top coats who each have a coily cord appearing from beneath their collar which seems to tether their ear to their shoulder.

The Synod Hall is on the second floor of an enormous building. Its main auditorium

holds about 8000 people for the regular general audiences with the Pope held each Wednesday morning. Upstairs, the Synod Hall is a semi-circular auditorium with 300 large, comfortable seats, each equipped with a microphone and an earphone for hearing the simultaneous translation (into Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English for this synod).

The auditorium fills slowly for each session; the participants talk convivially in scattered clusters. This usually continues some minutes past the appointed time for the session, for nothing starts until the arrival of the Pope, which is usually 10 minutes later than scheduled.

When he makes his slow entrance, surrounded by synod officials and followed by his personal secretary, he is greeted by applause. Nearing the podium, he often stops to acknowledge the greeting. Although he seems physically very frail, his face lights up with a playful smile and his eyes sparkle with what often appears to be a mischievous twinkle.

'Chaplin' greeting

At times he gives what observers have dubbed his "Charlie Chaplin" greeting, a deft flick of the wrist that makes his cane arc sharply upward, momentarily poised heavenward, before returning to its earthly duty.

When he arrives at his place at the centre of the podium, his personal secretary often places one or two books on the table in front of him. One of them is a thick breviary (the other, the "Contemporary Testimony" I gave him, no doubt). In the course of the meetings, the Pope at times wisely discerns that his personal devotions take priority over a particular speech or report.

He opens each session by leading in a brief litany of prayers and Scripture readings

(mainly from the Psalms) in Latin, printed in a small lectionary that has been produced especially for the synod. After worship, the session is ready to begin its work. The Pope is flanked by the three presidents seated to his right, the General Secretary for Episcopal Synods to his left, and beyond him, three other officers of the synod.

Encountering the living Christ

The synod is focussed on a theme: "Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: the Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America." The theme articulates for the continent of America the "new evangelization" which Pope Paul VI expounded in his penetrating encyclical entitled "Evangelization Today" (1974).

This evangelization is called "new" in two senses. It is new in comparison to the evangelization that occurred in close conjunction with colonization. It is also new as a call to a fresh approach to the challenge of living and proclaiming the gospel in secular, pluralist cultures.

The new evangelization ("new in its ardor, new in its methods and new in its expressions," as the current Pope has put it) is therefore also referred to as "re-evangelization." In all cases, evangelization describes the call to enter into the radical depth and cosmic scope of the

mystery who is Christ.

The depth of the gospel comes to expression in the working document of the synod. The living, risen Christ, the document explains, "wishes to encounter all those living on this continent in order to offer them his word of love and hope at this crucial juncture in history, which marks the passing from the second to the third millennium."

The working document insists that "the fundamental mission of the Church is to evangelize," the principal objective of which is "to direct each person towards a deep experience of God through the mystery of Christ."

All through the document there is a strong emphasis on the personal nature of the encounter with the living Christ. This comes through especially in the first two of the threefold way expressed in the subtitle: "The way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America."

But even here, "conversion" is never reduced to the inner change of isolated individuals, nor is "communion" reduced to the mystic devotion of solitary saints. The document speaks of "structures of sin" which call for a kind of social conversion, the conversion of "aspects of today's society."

These social dimensions of the encounter with the living Christ are elaborated extensively under the last heading, "Solidarity."



George VanderVelde receives a papal handshake after his presentation to synod. Top left is Cardinal Schotte of Belgium, who organizes all synods in Rome.

Many of the speakers, especially the Latin American bishops and auditors, underscored the need to address the complex and often unbearable social conditions, particularly in the South, as well as in the large cities in both regions of the hemisphere; the growing gap between rich and poor and North and South and within each region (islands of riches amidst a sea of poverty in the South; pockets of poverty in suits of luxury in the North); the stranglehold of international debt on many countries; consumerism; abortion and, yes, contraception; the dislocation and uprootedness brought about by the (often forced) migration of huge sectors of society; the lucrative trade in narcotics and the abject enslavement it inflicts; child prostitution; the globalization of the economy which marginalizes and impoverishes whole countries and regions; the corruption in politics and commerce — and through it all the anguished cry of the poor, the destitute, the desolate.

Yet this breadth of scope did not lead to a kind of horizontalism, a reduction of the gospel to a program for social-economic renewal. If this danger was present at all, it was exorcized in a speech by Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the Vatican guardian of orthodoxy). After his intervention, several speakers were quick to indicate their strong agreement with the Cardinal.

Hierarchical inter-relations

This incident points to the fascinating inter-relation between the supremely hierarchical structure of such a synod, on the one hand, and the room it creates for broad-ranging, mission-oriented, pastoral deliberations.

The phenomenon of bishops' synods is relatively new. It received its impulse at the Second Vatican Council's (1962-1965) concern for a more collegial relationship between the bishops and the Pope in the pastoral guidance of the church.

Nevertheless, by any Protestant standard the synod is collegial in an extremely limited sense. It remains decidedly hierarchical. The hierarchical structure is evident in the composition of the synod's membership. Only the bishops (including archbishops and cardinals) are among the 231 actual synod

members (Richard Neuhaus, a well-known conservative American priest who was formerly a Lutheran, is one of the few exceptions).

Their number is augmented by a group of 58 auditors and experts, who speak but do not have a vote. Among this group is Chief Harry Lafond from Saskatchewan and Prof. Belisario Betancur, the former president of Colombia. Sixteen of the non-voting participants are women. In addition there are five fraternal (i.e., non-Roman Catholic) delegates, one each from Latin America, the U.S., Canada, the Caribbean, and a representative of the Orthodox Church. Moreover, except for the publication

and what they don't say.

It is highly unlikely that one of the bishops or cardinals — each of whom he has personally elevated to that office — would in his presence challenge, for example, the ban on artificial contraception, or on the ordination of women.

This is where the intervention of Cardinal Ratzinger comes in. One can't help but wonder whether the subsequent endorsements indicate heartfelt agreement with the substance of the speech or display too ready a deference to one of the most powerful figures in the Catholic Church.

Moreover, if these pressures weren't enough, can the car-

how many names are already on the speakers' list nor whether a new motion cancels the entire list, not having to debate anything — to be freed from all of this is highly liberating.

At the Synod in Rome everybody is "on the list." *Everyone*, including auditors and fraternal delegates, get their eight minutes at the microphone. Within the broad parameters of the working document, the participants are free to speak about the actual situations of the people of God in their own settings. The process gives full scope for strong missional, pastoral presentations in the plenary hall, and in small groups, engaging discussions about the issues

five official languages. Our host from the Vatican ecumenical office, a monsignor, sits with the fraternal delegate from the Caribbean and myself.

Although he is dressed in the liturgical robes appropriate for such a mass, he does not partake. This comes as a surprise, especially because the opportunity to partake of communion in a special mass at which the Pope presides presents a deeply meaningful and relatively rare opportunity, even for a priest in Rome.

'Til we commune together...

At the end of the service, however, I no longer need to wonder whether he was troubled by some besetting sin, except that of division. He turned to us, shook our hands, and said: "Until the day that we can celebrate communion together."

Again, we are confronted by the reality of unity and division and the Pope's words: what unites us is much greater than what divides us. The painful reality of division is borne out by the solidarity with us which that priest expressed in his abstention from communion.

The joyful reality of the much greater unity comes to expression in the opening words of the "Message" issued by the Synod:

"At the threshold of the third millennium of Christianity, the members of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for America call out to all our brothers and sisters in America, and to all the world, the words which St. Paul proclaimed at the beginning of the first millennium: 'Jesus Christ is Lord!' (Phil 2:11).

"This we believe and preach with all our hearts. It is at the centre of our faith and the cornerstone of our lives. We believe that salvation comes to every man and woman only through the living Jesus Christ.

"It is through an encounter with Jesus, Redeemer of the World, that we are led to conversion from our sins, into communion with his grace, and thus in solidarity with our neighbors."

George VanderVelde, who is senior member in theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, was one of only five fraternal delegates worldwide to the Roman Catholic Synod for America held late last year in Rome. He represented the Protestant churches in Canada via the Canadian Council of Churches.



George VanderVelde (far right) makes a presentation while the Pope listens intently.

of a brief "Message," the astonishing aspect of the synod is the juridical status of its actions. The work of an entire month of meetings — more than 300 plenary speeches, lengthy discussions in a dozen small groups, and 78 wide-ranging proposals that originate in these groups — has the status of nothing more than advice to the Pope.

On Vatican Radio, one representative from the U.S. described the synod as a high-level discussion group which leaves behind some recommendations, with which the Pope may do as he sees fit. With the help of a Post-Synodal Council of about a dozen people, the Pope will issue an "Exhortation" taking into account the synod's advice.

Pressure to obey

The utterly hierarchical nature of the synod of bishops is underscored by its convocation. The synod is convened by none other than the Pope. He is the president and, although he never actually chairs the meetings, his presence must have a powerful influence on what delegates say

and what they don't say. It is highly unlikely that one of the bishops or cardinals — each of whom he has personally elevated to that office — would in his presence challenge, for example, the ban on artificial contraception, or on the ordination of women.

What if one of the three priests (as well as 18 others) who are members of the synod — not by virtue of their office or of election by a conference of bishops, but by papal appointment — should aspire to the noble office of bishop? Could he, as he prepares his speech, forget the figure in white?

Liberation within structure

Yet in some strange way, the hierarchical nature of the synod gives room for the broad-ranging speeches and discussions that take place. Not having to speak to motion, or worse, to an amendment of an amendment, not having to worry about a majority and a minority report, nor when to move from one to the other, not having to guess

facing the church.

Churches of the Reformation could greatly benefit from a "Roman style" synod every five years or so. It wouldn't need to be a month long, especially if we were to adopt the large electronic warning sign that signals, in bright red letters, the time remaining for the speaker: THREE MINUTES ... TWO MINUTES ... ONE MINUTE ... STOP! And if the sign goes unheeded, "Dead Mike" springs into action.

We wouldn't need to select a pope (whether because we don't have one or because we have one too many may be a moot point). Nor would we want only "office bearers" there. But it would be a synod that would address the central pastoral and missional task of our particular denomination as part of the challenge facing the Church as a whole.

The synod was concluded by a special mass in St. Peter's. The bishops enter in solemn procession, attired in their special vestments and mitres. The Pope leads the service, giving a brief homily, alternating among the

Family/Advice



Absence does make the heart grow fonder

I'm my mother's daughter, so here I go, writing her column, as she is occupied with other very serious matters!

While at Dordt College in Iowa, I missed my family, and the splendid red-treed hillsides

in the fall. During Christmas vacation, I missed Dordt.

I couldn't wait to again engross myself in the busyness of college life while being able to see my friends any time. Besides, the studying and college activities will help rebuild my ego after reading all those Christmas letters about miracle children in umpteen activities and sports. And I love Iowa's snowy winter — at least so far.

'A little slow'

I enjoyed my Christmas at home, but it was a little slow. So I was glad to meet Dordt friends at a hockey game between Dordt and Redeemer. The Dordt Blades wore bright white, with yellow and black accents. The Redeemer Royals wore too-snug faded blue jerseys.

"What's with all the Canadian flags?" asked my friend Julie. Across the arena from our small Dordt contingent, Redeemer students had proudly draped Canadian flags over the benches. "I don't know. They should know we're Canadians too." Just three of our 30 Dordt players were Americans.

Redeemer players expertly passed the puck to their teammates, and Dordt chased after them. When the puck landed in the offense zone, there were no Blades available to score. We watched in consternation.

How about just one?

"One goal for Dordt is all I ask," I said to myself when the score was 2-0 for Redeemer.

Meanwhile, my friends and I caught up on each others' vacations. Emily said that one evening she was at home with her older brother and sister. They yawned and walked up the stairs to bed. Emily followed suit. Tucked in bed, she realized something. "Hey! It's only 9:30!"

Then my friend Julie said, "I'm so afraid that at Dordt I'll have to go to bed at 11:00 every night." Losing the ability to climb into bed at 2 a.m. is the collegiate's worst fear.

Finally, in the second period, a Blade scored. But it wasn't enough, and time ticked by with no more goals. "Are there three periods or four quarters?" I asked. I thought three 15-minute periods was kind of short.

"Four quarters," Emily replied. We watched in silence for a while. The Blades took a lot of shots, but they didn't make it past Redeemer's expert goalie.

"That's my third cousin," I pointed out the only Blade in the offense area.

"They're used to playing offensively," we reasoned. They just couldn't play the game in this wussie manner.

R & R is over

Julie told me that Len, Number 7, had missed hearing the game rules at the start of the tour; he hadn't known that body-checking was forbidden. So for nearly the whole game he sat in the penalty box, a perplexed frown on his face.

High school classmates who attended Redeemer came over to say hi, and to rib us. I slipped over to the Redeemer side of the arena to greet some old friends, and to tell them to greet other friends for me. Except it was the third and final period, not the third quarter, so I ended up stiff and sheepish among the victorious Redeemer students at the end of the game.

Although we lost, I was glad to see some of my friends again, and to cheer on our college hockey team. As my Dordt life resumes, I will try to bloom where God has planted me.

Sunday observance once more

Dear P & M:

Months ago you gave an answer to the question of sports being played on Sunday in which you said, as I recall, that many of us watch sports on television on Sunday and, therefore, it is not all that bad. After all, we're all Christians.

Your statement has bothered me for a long time. It is not easy for me to think of an intellectual way to refute your answer, so I've enclosed a booklet by Rev. L.R. Shelton, Jr. He makes the point that we must hate sin in every form whether we are labourers, farmers, builders or pastors. Most of the time your advice is right on, but this time you were far off base and a great danger to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Dear Sunday Sports Again:

This is what we actually said: "It would be easy for us to say that sports on Sunday is bad, period. But then we have to be consistent and also refuse to watch any sports on TV on Sunday, including the closing ceremony of the Olympics." We did not mean to imply that human behavior is our norm for what we may or may not do. Our intent was to warn those who participate by *viewing* sports not to judge those who participate by *playing* sports on Sundays.

We took the time to read Rev. Shelton's booklet "Profession of Christ Without Life Exposed: Possession of Life In Christ Explained." In it, the author attacks "easy believism" and "carnal Christianity," terms he uses to describe a Christian lifestyle which professes Jesus as Lord but shows little evidence of separation from the world.

His main point? Live a sanctified life which allows no compromise with sin.

Unfortunately, the booklet is long on doctrine but short on practical application. We agree with the author that professing Christ and practicing godliness are to go hand in hand. We also agree that all of us are tempted to compromise our faith and slide into sin. But the only life illustration he gives comes in the beginning when he says we have time for eating, drinking, pleasure, conversation with family and friends, hunting, fishing, swimming, skiing, skating, entertainment, work, school, television, radio, stereo and movies but we don't have the same amount of time for God.

It may be true that some of us fill our lives with so many activities that we shortchange God. But what is Shelton saying about these normal activities? Is he suggesting that it's sinful and ungodly to engage in casual conversation, sports and personal relaxation — or only if those things crowd out God?

As Reformed Christians, our world-and-life-view has refused to draw lines between sacred and secular activity the way Shelton seems to do. Going to church is "sacred"; so is going to work. Helping a neighbor in need is sacred; so is playing with your children. Volunteering in Vacation Bible school is sacred; so is coaching little league baseball. The struggle between sin

Peter and Marja



are
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and salvation exists in every situation. Every sphere is under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

In the same vein, Sunday is a holy day; but so are all days. The Apostle Paul lifts the Old Testament legalism away from the Sabbath: "One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). Elsewhere, the notion of sabbath rest is expanded to every day and all of life (Heb. 4:9,10).

Where does this leave us? We conclude that the question of sin and sanctification has less to do with Sunday observance and more to do with loving God and our neighbor every day. It makes us realize that true godliness has less to do with outward appearance than inward devotion to God. Indeed, we know many Christians who enjoy Sunday brunch and an afternoon football game on TV after church whose lives in Christ bear as much fruit as other Christians who choose to honor the Sunday by abstaining from certain activities and places.

On the basis of Romans 14:5, if we are to abstain from anything, it is to judge each other for the various ways we make Sunday special. It should always include worship. It should always be a celebration of Christ's resurrection. And it should always be used for setting aside monetary gifts for ministry.

Beyond that, however, the New Testament does not set up a difficult set of Sunday do's and don'ts for God's people. In fact, it removes them. We honestly believe that the Apostle Paul himself has removed the legalism which still causes Christians of all denominations to clash as we argue about what we may or may not do on Sunday.

We don't know how dangerous or influential our column is. We do know that Jesus, and Paul too, got into a lot of hot water over their understanding of the Sabbath. And we sense that things tend to heat up for us whenever we try to apply their understanding to Sunday observance issues in the '90s.

Finally, let us clearly state that Romans 14:5 also means that we deeply respect the way you choose to observe the Sunday. Your strict stance acts as a preserving force among God's people so that the first day of the week will always remain special.

From now until the end of April, please direct your questions to: Bert Witvoet, *Christian Courier*, 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

Peter and Marja Slofstra, who are currently on sabbatical, are a pastor and wife team who live in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vundermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Comment

Face-to-face for the first time

Dear Peter:

When you and I finally sat down face-to-face in a restaurant on a brisk but sunny afternoon a couple weeks before Christmas, I remember one of the first things you said: "What could a couple hours of conversation do to enhance this relationship?" I didn't tell you this at the time, but I remember thinking to myself, "Well! Oh ye of little faith."

But now it's almost a month later and the whole thing is a distant memory. Maybe you were right. My most vivid image of the meeting is not anything we talked about, but the first moment I laid eyes on your face. Because at that precise moment I had my nose buried in a Kleenex and I was mentally kicking myself, thinking, "This makes a really great impression!" And my second thought was, "Well, at least the red mittens I promised I'd be wearing are front and centre and he didn't miss those!" It's a good thing you waved to me from your car, because there are a lot of brown Civics in Toronto and I'm not in the habit of jumping into them on street corners. So now I know what your voice sounds like and that you like to drink tea when you have a cold. Now what?

Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth,

I'm sorry, but I just have to mention outright that I think the whole thing was completely unfair. You had not only seen a photo of me before, but you also had been generously informed about my personality by a mutual Toronto friend. So you had a definite advantage over me, as I had no resources beyond our e-mail exchanges. But I agree. Now that I know what you look and sound like and that you sometimes have lunch after 2 p.m. on Saturdays, what qualitative difference will it make to our exchanges? Not much, I'm afraid.

Peter

Hi again, Peter,

You're right. I'm not being fair. [For the benefit of our readers, the photo of Peter was in a Redeemer College newsletter that made its way into my mailbox.] But the whole experience has been a little awkward. Yes, I did keep bumping into people who either (a) went to school with you, (b) were related to someone who went to school with you, (c) knew someone who went to school with you, or (d) had recently met you at some conference or another.

I would shake my head gently at these people and ask them to keep all their interesting details about you to themselves, that you were supposed to remain this mysterious enigma until the appropriate date, but that started to become a great deal of effort and I finally gave up. It makes me think that what the rest of the world calls Six Degrees of Separation the Canadian CRC community should call Two Degrees. What d'ya think?

But you know, I do have a distinct memory of this whole not-meeting-thing being your idea. (Correct me if I'm wrong.) I'll stop giving you a hard time if you answer me this: what did you hope to get out of the experience?

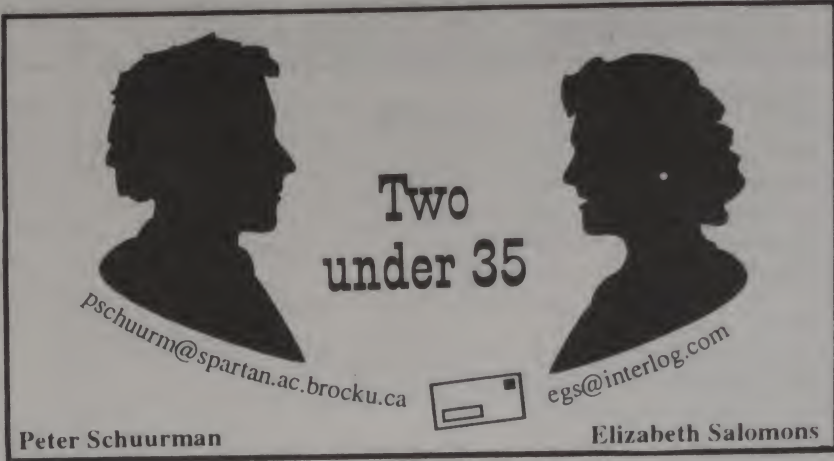
E.

Elizabeth,

What you call Two Degrees, I call Dutch Bingo. You meet a stranger and talk about people you know until you hit a friend or relative you have in common. I think, however, the fact that you grew up in the West makes a big difference — your family isn't quite as much a part of local Dutch lore. But a number of people have tried to socially locate you in terms of your dad, who is a CRC pastor.

You're right about this being my idea, and I guess you could say that my reasons came mostly from academic curiosity. You see, I spent a large part of my graduate degree studying the ways in which new electronic media effect the way we communicate and (mis)understand one another.

I thought it would be a neat experiment to see what it's like to communicate with someone *only* through e-mail. E-mail is usually a supplementary way of continuing relationships that we began and continue to maintain in more



personal ways — be it by phone or meeting in person. What if it were not a supplementary means of communicating with someone, but your only means? How does this media condition and limit human communication?

P.

Peter,

And ... what conditions and limitations did you find? Or do we have to have lunch a couple more times for you to figure that out?

E.

Elizabeth,

I was hoping you had some insights on the matter. :-) I guess one thing that occurred to me was that I think this was the first time I'd gotten to know how someone writes (and thinks) before I knew what he or she looked like. I wonder if blind people get to know others more deeply because they have to listen in order to get an impression. On e-mail, you can only read to get an impression. What do you think?

P.

Dear Peter,

This discussion reminds me of the whole dilemma of whether to read the book before you see the movie. I think it depends on how you process information. I'm a visual person — my comprehension is much better if I read the words written out than if somebody reads them to me. I hate talking on the phone and will instead walk to the other end of the office to ask a quick question of someone face-to-face.

So ... my personal evaluation of this little experience is that through our e-mail conversations, I've ended up with a pretty good idea of the type of person you are. When we write these columns and it's my turn to start, I usually know how you're going to respond. And meeting you was only a confirmation of what I have been suspecting for a couple of months.

Now, maybe I'm making some quick judgments and am projecting onto you expectations I've taken from other things I know about you, such as your work and where and what you've studied. You say that e-mail impressions come *only* through reading, but reading is one of my most important ways of taking in information. A bit old-fashioned maybe and a bit bookish, but hey, that's probably why I studied English and history instead of sociology. And it marks a significant difference between the two of us.

I feel a little bit like a lab rat, when all's said and done. The day we met, barely seconds before you drove up, I had a moment of incredible panic and wondered what the repercussions of standing you up would be. Guess we'll never know, will we?


E.

Elizabeth, I think you are a better "reader" than I am. For whatever reason, I thought you would be more of the working-woman executive/professional type than the reflective graduate student type, if that's a fair assessment. Then again, maybe I just caught you on a Saturday, when you're more relaxed and pensive.... Regardless, I think you said it best when we first sat down in the cafe: "This is weird, isn't it?"

In the flesh,
Peter

Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance editor who lives in Toronto and is a member of First CRC there. Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplain at Brock University. He's a member of Jubilee CRC in St. Catharines.

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Engagement	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Obituaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries . \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p>HOLMAN:</p> <p>With thankfulness to our heavenly Father, Mr. and Mrs. Klaas D. Holman of Mt. Brydges, Ont., announce the engagement of our daughter</p> <p>ANGELA to GREGORY</p> <p>son of Mr. and Mrs. Marjan Skrobar of Windsor, Ont. A fall wedding is planned.</p> <p>Birthdays</p> <p>The children of:</p> <p>LEUNTJE (LOUISE) NAMINK (née JONGEJAN)</p> <p>are happy and thankful to the Lord to be able to celebrate the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother on Feb. 9, 1998.</p> <p>Congratulations and lots of love from your six children, 18 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. You're a great Mom!</p> <p>Praise God. Psalm 23:6.</p> <p>Open house will be held, D.V., on Saturday, Feb. 14, 1998, from 2-4 p.m., in Harmony Hall, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont. Best wishes only.</p> <p>Home address: Holland Christian Homes, PT909, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7 Phone: (905)455-4187.</p> <p>Anniversaries</p> <p></p> <p>Ijlst, Fr. Cobourg the Neth. Ont. 1943 January 27 1998</p> <p>"Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways" (Ps. 128:1).</p> <p>With praise and thanksgiving to God, we joyfully celebrate the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents</p> <p>JENTJE and ANNA ANDELA (née BERGSTRA)</p> <p>Thank you for your years of love and support. Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless you as your journey through life continues.</p> <p>John & Corry Andela — Peterborough Chantal & Steve Ervine, Sasha Andela Louis & Tina Andela — Caledonia Tammy & Rick Veld Brenda & John O'Hara — Cobourg Jody, David, Michael, Elisha & Erin Jeanette & Tom MacDonald — Cobourg Kristy, Joel Home address: 672 Burnham St., Cobourg, ON K9A 2X4</p>	<p>Zevenhuizen, Z.H. Brampton, Ont. 1933 February 1 1998</p> <p>With praise and thanks to the Lord we are happy to announce, D.V., the 65th anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents</p> <p>LEENDERT VAN ROOYEN and CORNELIA DIRKJE VAN ROOYEN-UYL</p> <p>Congratulations Mom and Dad. Bill & Marg Van Rooyen — Simcoe, Ont.</p> <p>Hannie Corvers — Bowmanville, Ont. Grandchildren and spouses and great-grandchildren. Address: Mr. and Mrs. L. Van Rooyen, Holland Christian Homes, CT1102, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p> <p>Obituaries</p> <p>"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps. 23).</p> <p>MARIA HENDRIKA (DE VRIES) BLYLEVEN</p> <p>was taken peacefully into Heavenly Glory on Monday, Dec. 29, 1997, in her 92nd year.</p> <p>Beloved wife of the late William Leendert Blyleven (Dec. 2, 1976). Loving mother of: Len & Diny Blyleven — Fisherville Marie & John Heeg — Hagersville Harry & Jannie Blyleven — Woodstock</p> <p>Joyce & Jim te Brake — Wainfleet Survived by 20 grandchildren and 56 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Predeceased by two grandchildren: Marilyn Houwer (1996) and Yvonne te Brake (1972). Survived by one sister, Eef Melis and predeceased by four brothers and five sisters in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The funeral service was held on Friday, Jan. 2, 1998, at Mountainview Chr. Ref. Church, Grimsby, Ont., followed by interment at Greenwood Cemetery, Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>Correspondence address: Len Blyleven, R.R. 3, Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0</p> <p>Church News</p> <p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>Call extended: — Hope, Port Perry, Ont., Rev. Norman A. Sennema of Charlottetown, P.E.I.</p> <p>New address: — Rev. John H. Noordhof, Box 153, Iron Springs, AB T0K 1G0</p>	<p>Oostermeer Cornwall the Neth. Ont.</p> <p><i>In God's Care</i></p> <p>On Jan. 11, 1998, the Lord called His servant</p> <p>JURJEN DE VRIES</p> <p>home to glory.</p> <p>Predeceased by his dear wife Hielkje de Vries (Veerman) on May 29, 1997, and daughter Jenny Binette, 1977, and infant son Pieter, 1945.</p> <p>Dear father of: Rene & Sandra de Vries — Avonmore, Ont.</p> <p>Andy & Linda de Vries — Cornwall, Ont.</p> <p>Linda (Mrs. Nick Van Dalen) — Cornwall, Ont.</p> <p>Helen (Mrs. Gerry Kleiboer) — Prescott, Ont.</p> <p>Survived by 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.</p> <p>Funeral was held on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 1998, at Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church, Cornwall, Ont.</p> <p>Buitenpost, Fr. Aylmer the Neth. Ont.</p> <p><i>Rejoice! For Jesus comes again.</i></p> <p>On Jan. 15, 1998, peacefully in his own bed,</p> <p>ALLE HELDER</p> <p>was called home by the Lord.</p> <p>He was in his 93rd year, and a resident of Terrace Lodge, Aylmer, Ont.</p> <p>Dear husband of the late Zwaantje (Van Kooten) Helder (1978).</p> <p>Loving father of: Henry & Elaine Helder — Belmont Corrie & George Hooghiem — Aylmer Jane & Harry Van Gorp — Belmont Toney & Margaret Helder — Aylmer Minnie & Andy Hiemstra — Aylmer Bernard & Jayne Helder — Belmont Annie & John Hulst — Aylmer Joanne & Ralph Vording — Belmont</p> <p>grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Predeceased by one grandson.</p> <p>Alle and his wife Zwaantje came to Canada in 1949 residing in the Aylmer area. After many years of farming Dad retired and spent many days and evenings writing his book "The Helder Legacy" which was printed in 1993. After this he felt his life here on earth was fulfilled and waited for the Lord's time to take him home to heavenly glory.</p> <p>The funeral service of praise to our Lord and thanksgiving for our father was held in the Aylmer Chr. Ref. Church on Saturday, Jan. 17, 1998, with Rev. John Hellinga and Pastor Louis Bosma officiating.</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Offering 7% on 3 year loan money for successful real estate partnership. (403) 449-6143</p>	<p>Oosterhessel, Dr. Salmon Arm the Neth. B.C.</p> <p>Feb. 26, 1927 - Dec. 30, 1997</p> <p>Peacefully the Lord called home His dear child</p> <p>KORNELIS (KOR) JAN TIEMEN MULLER</p> <p>A devoted husband, thankful that the Lord gave us 42 years together, he leaves in the care of his faithful Savior, his dear wife Audrey Muller (Vis).</p> <p>Wonderful father and cherished opa to:</p> <p>Peter & Marilyn Muller — Salmon Arm, B.C. Chris & Jenny Lucie Breel — Calgary, Alta. Joe, Michael, David & Lorena Edy & Dave De Boer — Salmon Arm, B.C. Carolyn, Harmen, Kasey & Alyssa Dirk & Rita Muller — Surrey, B.C. Cory & Nicole Glenda & Bill Taylor — Salmon Arm, B.C. Darin, Cody & Kaitlynn Corinne & Steve Jagt — Saanichton, B.C. Ryan, Kimberly, Amanda & Kevin Raymon Muller (Zana Cole) — Salmon Arm, B.C. Lori-Ann & Bill Rennie — Salmon Arm, B.C. Cheri & Bradley Lisa Muller — Langley, B.C.</p> <p>Two special children Margaret Paisley and Pauline Rempel at home.</p> <p>God is our comfort and strength as we miss Kor and feel the pain and sadness, but rejoice that Kor is now with Jesus forever. In the many years of struggling with diabetes and the last two years with cancer he never complained, always testifying of God's love and that he loved the Lord. His favorite psalm was Psalm 42.</p> <p><i>As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.</i></p> <p><i>When can I go and meet with God? Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him my Savior and my God" (Ps.42:1-2,5).</i></p> <p>"And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps.23:6b).</p> <p>The funeral service was held in the Salmon Arm Chr. Ref. Church, on Jan. 13, 1998, Pastor Ron Van Den Brink officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: Mrs. Audrey Muller, 3251 8th Avenue, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 2K7</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>ONE TO ANOTHER</p> <p>Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.</p> <p>Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7</p>
<p>Thank You</p> <p>DUTHLER:</p> <p>Thank you for all the expressions of love and kindness, received for the occasion of our 60th wedding anniversary. Your cards, gifts and visits were much appreciated. Thanks be to God.</p> <p>John and Sara Duthler 6 Lancaster Dr. Southampton, ON N0H 2L0</p>				

Classifieds

Obituaries

Kommerzijl Barrie
the Neth. Ont.

Oct. 9, 1921 - Dec. 29, 1997

2 Corinthians 5:1

On Dec. 29, 1997, the Lord in His wisdom took home my loving husband

JOHN SNAAK

in his 77th year.

Dear husband of Jean Snaak for 46 years.

Loving father of:

Wendy & Don Holzer

Bill & Desiree Snaak

Grace & Arnold Veen

Loving grandfather of Tamara, Sarah, Melanie, Jeffrey, Danielle, Matthew and Lauren.

Predeceased by son Harry and granddaughter Meaghen.

The funeral took place on Jan. 2, 1998, at Covenant Chr. Ref. Church in Barrie, Ont., Rev. H. Eshuis officiating.

Correspondence address:

Jean Snaak, 199 Patterson Rd., Barrie, ON L4N 4R7

Wildervank Strathroy
the Neth. Ont.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness..." (2 Tim. 4:7,8a).

In full assurance of faith the Lord has taken to himself on Jan. 19, 1998, our dearly beloved husband, father, opa, and great-grandfather

SOLKE VANDER BORGH

bom April 26, 1909. He was happily married for almost 63 years.

His beloved wife:

Grietje Vander Borgh-Oldenziel.

His children:

Jean & Adrian Van Geest — Blyth, Ont.

John & Winnie Vander Borgh — Woodstock, Ont.

Herman & Marjorie Vander Borgh — Listowel, Ont.

Nettie & Jerry Kiers — Picture Butte, Alta.

Rita & Jerry Kavanaugh Windsor, Ont. Seventeen grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Correspondence address:

Mrs. G. Vander Borgh, 400 Dominion St., Apt. 19, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8

Accommodation

Share accommodations with two other males. Christian male, non-smoker, use of full house, laundry. Hamilton Mountain location. \$325 per month plus utilities. Call Marcel at (905) 387-7444.

Interested in placing an ad.
Call us for details.

Miscellaneous

Please note that Christian Courier now has the following e-mail addresses:

Bert Witvoet — Editor:
cceditor@aol.com

Marian Van Til — Associate Editor:
cceditor2@aol.com

Alan Doerksen — Journalist:
ccjournal@aol.com

Stan de Jong — Manager:
ccjournal@aol.com

Grace Bowman — Subscriptions:
ccsubscrip@aol.com

Ingrid Torn — Advertising:
ccadverts@aol.com

Job Opportunities

Ottawa Christian School is seeking applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

Our school is a vibrant and growing non-denominational community of 180 students and 11 teachers, offering an educational program from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. We are looking for an energetic and dynamic leader to direct the operation of the school and outreach into the community. The position includes both teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a letter of application and a curriculum vitae before **Feb. 15, 1998**, to:

**Principal Search Committee
c/o Mr. L. Vandergrift**

937 Alpine Ave., Ottawa, ON K2B 5R9

For further information, please call (613) 820-0272.

Ottawa Christian School is a member of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

First Chr. Ref. Church, Hamilton, Ont., invites applications for a musician to play organ (pipe) for services and to develop a choral group. Job is 10 hours/week; pay up to level 5 RCCO, based on qualifications. Contact **Kathleen Kennedy (905) 528-3826** for details. Send resume by **Feb. 20, 1998**, to:

**Music Search Committee, First Chr. Ref. Church,
181 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C9.**

Job Opportunities

**Redeemer Christian High School
in Ottawa seeks a**

Computer Teacher/Systems Administrator

for September 1998

Redeemer is continuing to expand its computer program across the curriculum. The school has recently opened its completely renovated educational complex and is implementing its plan to upgrade its computer resources.

The task entails leadership and resource for staff, developing and teaching computer courses and administering the Novell network. There is strong outside support from our school community.

This full-time position provides time for administration and will require teaching additional courses in the initial years. Candidates must be experienced teachers with a strong background in computer technology and its application in an educational setting.

Please send your resume, a statement of your vision for the use and purpose of computers in Christian education, and references to:

**Mr. Derek Maggs, Principal
Redeemer Christian High School
82 Colonnade Road North, Nepean, ON K2E 7L2
Fax: (613) 723-9321; Phone: (613) 723-9262**

**Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School
Maple Ridge, B.C.**

Vice Principal Position

Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School is now accepting applications for a possible Vice Principal position for the 1998/99 school year. Responsibilities for this position include Intermediate/Middle School co-ordinator and leadership in planning for additional grades. This position also includes 50% teaching time at the Middle School level.

Haney-Pitt Meadows Chr. School is located in Maple Ridge, B.C., 40 minutes east of Vancouver.

Interested candidates should send resumes to:

**Rod Berg, 12140 - 203rd Street, Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4V5
or call (604) 465-4442 for more information.**

CHAPLAINCY VACANCY

Geneva Fellowship, a chaplaincy at **Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.**, and funded by the Christian Reformed Church, is seeking male and female applicants to fill a recent chaplaincy vacancy. Located at the university campus, the chaplaincy is uniquely equipped to assist students in engaging, from a Christian perspective, questions of current and academic concern, and to offer spiritual assistance to undergraduate and graduate students, and to university staff and faculty. Ordination is not a prerequisite.

The position will start on **July 1, 1998**. The deadline for applications is **March 31, 1998**. A package containing a detailed description of the position, as well as the application procedures, may be obtained by phoning **Leo Jonker at (613) 545-2402 (work)** or **(613) 389-5440 (home)**, or by sending an e-mail message to: **leo@mast.queensu.ca**

Classifieds

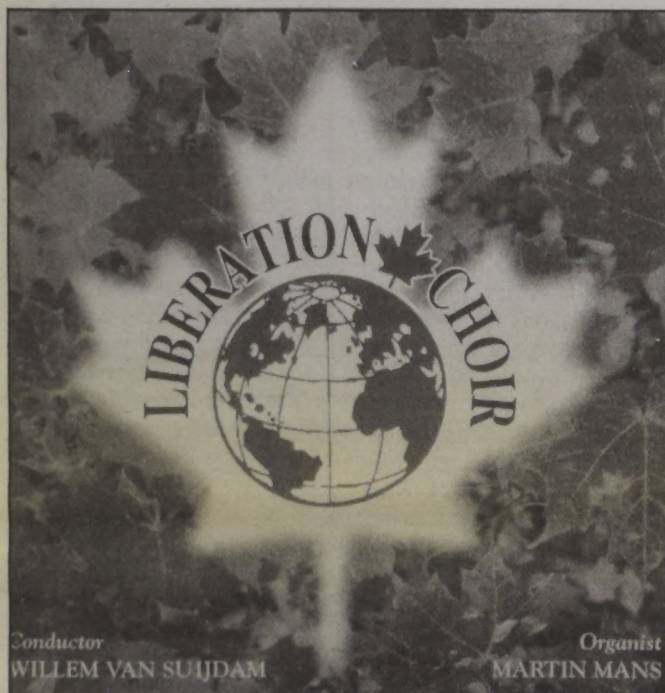
Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous	Job Opportunities
<p>Auto Mechanic and Auto Mechanic Apprentice (3rd or 4th year) needed in very busy 7 bay auto centre in Ancaster, Ont. Family owned and geared to customer satisfaction. Consistent work habit and computer diagnostic skill a must. Flat rate experience an asset. Wages geared to experience plus incentive program. Fax resume to 905-648-5314 or call 905-648-4113.</p>	<p>South Africa Diaconal Partnership Consultant</p> <p>The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is currently seeking applicants for the full-time position of South Africa Diaconal Partnership Consultant for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). The qualified individual will be responsible for producing community development strategies and providing consultation to Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa clergy leadership while serving as a co-ordinating liaison between South African business and the CRWRC-East Africa team, Partners for Christian Development, Reformed Church of America, and Christ Memorial Church.</p> <p>A Bachelor's degree and three years of experience in community development, preferably in micro-business development. Funding development via grants and other sources is a strong asset. Knowledge and understanding of the Reformed faith is required and relocation to South Africa is necessary.</p> <p>A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest, by Feb. 20, 1998, to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Director of Personnel Christian Reformed Church in North America 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560-0500 (616) 224-5881/fax (616) 224-5895 e-mail: colemann@CRCNA.org</p>	<p>Calvin College Education Department</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CALVIN College</p> <p>The Calvin College Education Department seeks candidates for a tenure-track position (subject to approval) which primarily involves teaching and advising in the M. Ed. Curriculum and Instruction Program with some duties in the undergraduate teacher education program.</p> <p>Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in curriculum and instruction; 2) K-12 teaching and/or administration experience; 3) a scholarship agenda; and 4) commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.</p> <p>Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity and is an equal opportunity employer. The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to:</p> <p>Dr. L. Stegink, Department Chair, Education Department, Calvin College, 3201 Burton, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546, by March 1, 1998, or until the position is filled.</p>
<p>Teachers</p> <p>BARRIE, Ont.: Timothy Chr. School is accepting applications for two possible teaching positions in grades 6 and 7. If you are able to articulate a rich Christian perspective, establish a warm rapport with students and have specific training in computers, science or, visual arts, please direct your resume to:</p> <p>Mrs. Jane Tjeerdsma Timothy Christian School 49 Ferris Lane Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1 Only suitable applicants will be contacted.</p>		
<p>LANGLEY, B.C.: Langley Chr. Schools. Our High School's expansion at Grade 12 and increased enrolment means staffing positions will be open for the 1998-99 school year. Applicants need to send a resume, statement of educational philosophy, and teaching evaluation reports. Eligibility for BC teaching certification is needed. Priority will be given to applicants with training in the following areas:</p> <p>COMPUTER STUDIES: be able to run a networked lab and oversee and develop programs from grade 6-12.</p> <p>SOCIALS and BIBLE SCIENCE: PHYSICS and CHEMISTRY</p> <p>BUSINESS: MARKETING, ACCOUNTING MATH and ENGLISH</p> <p>Send applications to: Peter Van Huizen, Principal Langley Chr. High School 22702-48 Ave., Langley, BC V2Z 2T6 Phone: (604) 533-0842 Fax: (604) 533-0842 E-mail: LCSMH@Axionet.com</p>	<p>ADA REALTY LTD. 2011-137 Ave., Suite 404 Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2 (403) 473-8149 Sid Vandermeulen</p> <p>Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.</p> <p>Het vertrouwde adres.</p>	<p>Events</p> <p>Men In Praise Festival — April 25, 1998</p> <p>The "Crusaders" Male Choir will host the annual "Men In Praise Festival" this year. The festival will be held in the Agincourt Pentecostal Church, Agincourt, Ont., D.V., on Saturday, April 25, 1998, at 7:30 p.m. Seven southern-Ontario Christian male choruses will be participating, with about 350 men blending in harmony. The event is expected to be booked to capacity, so we recommend you get your tickets early. To obtain your tickets, please contact one of the male choir members you know, or phone John Ponsen at (519) 941-7036. You can also order tickets at this e-mail address: jjponson@beeline.ca. Price of the tickets is \$10 each. To order in Toronto, call John Hekman at (416) 223-6047.</p>
<p>Real Estate</p> <p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES</p> <p>available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info, call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>For Sale: Motel Niagara region. 22 units, 5 suites, 3 kitchenettes. Owners 4-bedroom home. Good income. \$398,000. Call Bill at (905) 732-2159</p> <p>Cottage for rent in scenic Holten (Holland). Contact: Andy Borger (905) 623-6049.</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Mortgage Participation 7.5% interest for amounts from \$25,000 and up.</p> <p>Our clients are offering participation in a First Mortgage in the amount of \$1,900,000 (one million nine hundred thousand dollars). Interest payable quarter yearly. Security: Situated in The High Point Business Park, 100 acres of prime commercial-industrial land at the intersection of Highways 401 and 25, in the town of Milton, Ont., now under development. Recently appraised at \$5,800,000 by Stewart, Young, Hillesheim & Atlin Limited Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants (A.A.C.I.), a copy of which is available.</p> <p>For more information please call Harry Snoek at H.S. Limited, 3 Bayview Forest Lane, Thornhill, Ont., at (905) 889-5300.</p>

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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Feb. 4 Annual "Church & The Law" seminar, for ministers, church leaders and Christian charities, providing practical information on current legal issues. From 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, Toronto (Etobicoke), Ont. Held in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. Main speakers: Carl Juneau (Revenue Canada) and Father Francis G. Morrissey (Ottawa's St. Paul's University). Info.: Phone (519) 669-5137, Fax (519) 669-3291.

Feb. 7 The WLU Early Music Ensemble presents Rameau's opera "Platee," 8 p.m., Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont.

Feb. 7 Concert of Praise and Prayer, with Grace and Colleen (Unity Music Ministries), 7 p.m., Ancaster CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 East, Ancaster, Ont. Sponsored by Salem. Freewill offering. Info.: (905) 528-0353.

Feb. 7 Presentation of "The Ragamuffin Gospel," a musical journey of the heart, 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, 301 Scott St., St. Catharines, Ont., Info.: (905) 934-0631.

News

Faith communities write to Paul Martin

Margaret Dinsdale

TORONTO — When federal Finance Minister Paul Martin rises in the House of Commons to deliver his budget at the end of February, he will be watched very carefully by the signatories of several letters he recently received in an unprecedented campaign to influence the budget.

The leaders of national organizations of faith groups wrote letters to Martin urging him to address the serious issue of child poverty and what one letter states as "communal responsibility" in real terms in his budget. Martin has beat his own timetable of reducing the deficit and will have what is estimated to be a \$1.4 billion budget surplus.

Put together by Gerald Vandezande of Citizens for Public Justice, whom the Ottawa Citizen called in a front page article, "the veteran Christian lobbyist," the letter campaign includes such groups as the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Eliminate child poverty

"There are times in the life of a nation when fundamental challenges must be faced," Vandezande's letter reads, "when fundamental choices must be made, and when a new course of political action for socio-economic justice must be charted.... This is one of those times!"

The campaign grew, at Vandezande's urging, from a reaction to the startling figures that 500,000 more children in



Finance Minister Paul Martin

Canada live in poverty since the one million there were in 1989. That was the same year that there was a unanimous resolution passed by the House of Commons to eliminate child poverty in this country by the year 2000.

"We need the equivalent of Team Canada to eliminate child poverty," Vandezande said in an interview. "This requires the active involvement of all clergy, church councils and pew sitters who have understood and realized the significance of the good news for the poor of which Jesus spoke in his first message in his hometown. If all of us in our own hometowns would do the same and challenge our elected representatives and power-brokers to show compassion, do justice and react in solidarity, then we could eradicate the obscenity of poverty."

Agents of grace

In his letter, Gary Walsh, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada said "in con-

versation with faith communities well beyond evangelicalism, I discover a keen interest in the core values which will be reflected at this unique moment in history. As the emerging fiscal dividend is allocated, the real character of Canada's leaders will be revealed."

In an interview, Walsh explained his participation in the campaign when he said "caring for souls and ignoring the total person is not the Jesus way."

"I read in a book that Christianity is most vital when we are agents of grace," he said. "We are not conduits of judgment. We are people who are known as people who initiate compassion and care and sensitivity."

Too much exclusion

And there is plenty of compassion needed, according to the Most Rev. Barry Curtis, Anglican archbishop of Calgary and president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

"The members of our churches are deeply concerned about the worsening situation of many families," he wrote in his letter. "A crisis of exclusion and inequality has been growing, pulling our society off balance. Pastoral workers in our churches see this crisis outlined in the faces of human beings. Some of the saddest faces belong to children whose parents now find the labour market an unwelcoming, insecure and unrewarding arena."

Curtis went on to describe how senior executives' wages are soaring while workers' pay has "been under harsh downward pressure."

Vandezande challenges wealthy Christians to be an example for others. "We must challenge all first ministers and finance ministers and local politicians to demonstrate in their budgets, constituencies and policy priorities that our vulnerable neighbors clearly deserve priority attention," he said. "Particularly the well-to-do within faith communities must increasingly become caring examples of generosity and solidarity for the sake of marginalized people and the unemployed."

'Values' promise

None of the letters demanded specific processes to address these issues, but as the letter from the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism asserts, "we

believe that Canada has an obligation to adopt policies that are rooted in compassion, equity and social justice.... We urge you to ensure that the next budget will reflect these fundamental values."

System unjust

It will be revealed to all in the budget whether Martin has listened to these pleas, but he was seen to open the door in 1997 when he said that financial debates are not about money, but "about values."

In a major interview in the publication *World Economic Affairs*, he said, "We have got to do for children what we have been able to do for seniors. The level of child poverty in this country is a disgrace, and there has got to be a great national effort to deal directly with that."

Faith communities are committed to assisting people, but they are also concerned for such structures as health care, says Jean-Claude Trottier, S.M., president of the Canadian Religious Conference which represents Roman Catholic religious orders. He points to the fiscal restraints of previous budgets as well as cuts in transfer payments to provinces.

And while faith groups want to help, they want the government to do their bit as well.

"I would say that evil is systemic and power is expressed in structures," says Gary Walsh. "I wouldn't want to take government off the hook for creating a civilized and just society."

But Gerald Vandezande says that it also needs to be practised on an individual level. "We can't expect the government to do it all. We have to come out of our church closets and equally practice in the market square what we confess in our creeds and worship services," Vandezande said.

"Either we are salt, light and leaven who will do this or we will perish because we have no vision."

Thinkbit

"If no one ever took risks, Michelangelo would have painted the Sistine floor."

American playwright
Neil Simon

News Digest

Church as punishment?

DALLAS, Tex. (EP) — The parents of a Shawnee Indian teenager are suing a judge for sentencing the boy to attend church or pay a \$200 fine for fighting. The judge, Bruce McDougal, said he will stop offering church attendance as an alternative sentence rather than fight the lawsuit.

The boy, 14-year-old Zack Smith, said he is an atheist and asserted, "I don't think I should have to go [to church] as punishment."

Singapore arranges marriages

SINGAPORE (Reuter) — In Canada, we expect a lot from the government but that doesn't include finding us a spouse. Not so in Singapore, where membership in the government's matchmaking agency, the Social Development Unit, is increasing. In the last five years, membership has risen by more than one third to about 20,000.

The agency organizes events for single university graduates, such as gatherings or trips abroad, with the sole purpose of finding the right partners for its members.

A falling reproductive rate and the reluctance of young Singaporeans to get married has become a national concern in the island state. One reason is that increasingly affluent and better educated Singaporeans expect more from marriage, lawyers and counselors say.

Won, but didn't buy a ticket

SYDNEY, Australia (EP) — She was surprised to hear that she had won the lottery, since she hadn't purchased a ticket. But the anonymous winner of \$7.5 million in a recent New South Wales lottery claimed her prize — then gave it all away, explaining that gambling was against her Christian beliefs.

The woman with the winning ticket usually receives a box of chocolates from a friend at Christmas, but because she was on a diet this year, her friend bought her a lottery ticket. The woman gave her friend \$1 million, then gave the rest to charity.

Mayor could face hefty fine

FREDERICTON, N.B. (CP) — A showdown may soon take place between the mayor and the gay community of this sleepy New Brunswick capital. Fredericton Mayor Brad Woodside has steadfastly refused to proclaim Gay Pride Week in the city despite repeated requests from gay and lesbian groups that want public recognition of their contributions to society.

The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission has already investigated complaints about Woodside's objection to Gay Pride Week and found merit in the argument that he is discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. If a human rights inquiry rules against him, Woodside could face a hefty fine such as the \$10,000 fine levied recently against the mayor of London, Ont.

Woodside said earlier he's not worried about a fine since he has received hundreds of letters of support for his position, and many people have offered to help cover costs. He said that issues involving sexual orientation have no place in the council chamber.